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Rides

15

2016 New Bike News
Harley-Davidson

18

2016 BMW S 1000 XR
The Missing Link

30

Custom: 1972 Triumph
Prenup Prototype

36

2015 Harley-Davidson Road Glide
Shark Attack

60

Tour: Andalusia Spain
A Hispania Adventure

68

2015 Kawasaki
Concours 1400
Tour de Force

Culture

26

Movie Review
Motocross Illustrated

42

Elefantentreffen
Gathering
In The Bleak Darkness
Of Winter

52

National Motorcycle
Museum
Chopper and Canvas

Reviewed

78

SENA Prism Video Camera & 20S
Communication
System

78



30



15



36



68

Departments

- 10 Editor's Column
- 12 Guest Column
- 14 Letters
- 75 Skills
- 80 Hot Products
- 81 Ad Index
- 82 Moto Art



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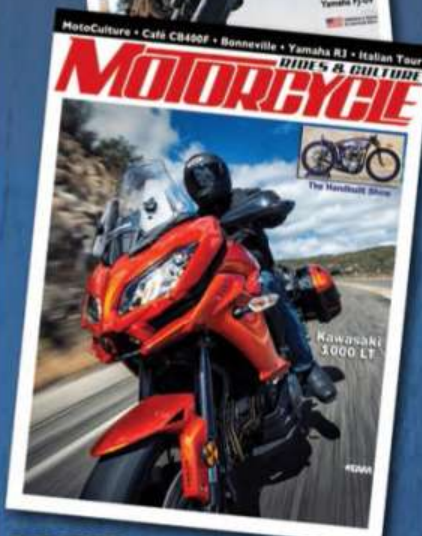
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5889/62281

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SAVE \$50

LOT 68333/69488 shown
• 1.3 GPM

\$79.99

REG. PRICE \$129.99

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LOT 60625 shown
95578/69645

SAVE 40%

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REG. PRICE \$19.99

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WOW SUPER COUPON

2.5 HP, 21 GALLON, 125 PSI VERTICAL AIR COMPRESSOR

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

SAVE \$70

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61454/61693/62803

\$149.99

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PITTSBURGH

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90764 shown

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SUPER COUPON

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PITTSBURGH

SAVE 37%

• 1500 lb. Capacity

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LOT 46319 shown
61160/61896

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SAVE 50%

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SUPER COUPON

PITTSBURGH

1000 LB. CAPACITY MOTORCYCLE LIFT

LOT 69904
68892 shown

SAVE \$400

\$299.99

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GUNKER HILL Security

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69590/61910/62447

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WOW SUPER COUPON

26", 4 DRAWER TOOL CART

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- Truckin' Magazine

US GENERAL

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61634/61952

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SUPER COUPON

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PITTSBURGH

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LOT 61670/97841 shown

SAVE 46%

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23727650

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SUPER COUPON

MICROFIBER CLEANING CLOTHS PACK OF 4

HFT

LOT 68440
69678 shown

SAVE 66%

\$1.99

REG. PRICE \$5.99

23743793

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12 TON SHOP PRESS

CENTRAL MACHINERY

• Pair of Arbor Plates Included

LOT 33497
60604 shown

SAVE \$100

\$99.99

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1500 LB. CAPACITY MOTORCYCLE LIFT
PITTSBURGH

LOT 69995 shown
60536/61632

• Lift Range: 5-1/4" to 17"

AWARD WINNING QUALITY

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WOW SUPER COUPON

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LOT 69052 shown
69111/62522 62573

\$699 VALUE

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CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

LOT 69265/62344 93897 shown

SAVE \$90

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1/2" INDUSTRIAL QUALITY SUPER HIGH TORQUE IMPACT WRENCH
CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

LOT 62627 68424 shown

700 ft. lbs. Max. Torque

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9 PIECE FULLY POLISHED COMBINATION WRENCH SETS
PITTSBURGH

LOT 69043/42304 shown

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WOW SUPER COUPON

4" x 36" BELT/6" DISC SANDER
CENTRAL MACHINERY

LOT 62502 97181 shown

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2500 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH WIRELESS REMOTE CONTROL
BADLAND

LOT 61258 shown
61840/61297/68146

NEW

SAVE \$90

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HFT

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PREDATOR GENERATORS

LOT 69729/68528/69676 shown

70 dB Noise Level

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LOT 47257 shown
61585/62387

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US • GENERAL

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LOT 62744/68784 shown
69387/62270/62591

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PITTSBURGH

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THUNDERBOLT

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HaulMaster

LOT 95896

1250 lb. Capacity

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DIRT BIKE STAND
PITTSBURGH

LOT 67151

1000 lb. Capacity

SAVE 50%

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Age-Old Question

W

hy is it that when you're a kid, you can't wait to grow up and when you're a grown up, (if not mentally, physically), you wish you were young again? Every once in awhile, it hits me: the realization that I'm older than the guys in that failed television show *Men of a Certain Age*. And seeing that the show isn't on

the air anymore gives me an ominous feeling. An Internet meme calmly states: "If you haven't grown up by 50, you don't have to." No, I'm not ready to hang it up, and I'm not walking with a cane (but my back has been aching lately). You know what? That *House* TV character sure had a cool cane holster on his bike. I'll have to remember that should I need one someday.

I recently read an upstart moto scribe lament online that he just doesn't get the whole appeal of cruisers and tourers and wanted someone to explain it to him. I didn't have the heart to tell him that he isn't old enough to understand. It's kind of like learning to ride a motorcycle; no amount of talking (or telling him) is going to convey what really doing it feels like. He just won't get it for awhile. And part of me, the part that subscribes to the adage *Old age and treachery will always beat youth and exuberance*, figured I'd leave him hanging, oh, a couple decades or so.

Maybe part of this month's melancholy-feeling column is due to having just received my esteemed colleague Reg Kittrelle's book, *Motorcycles and Our 2nd 50 Years* (see page 80, order a copy, even if you're not 50 yet, and God willing, you'll make it to that age). Then I realized that Reg used such a small font that I need to reach for my 1.75-strength readers. Cruel man that Reg. Another cruel guy, my eye doctor, says I have 20/20 vision, but when I asked him why the iPhone is getting harder to read, he said "Just get some cheap readers, you'll be fine."

Another age indicator was visiting Tony's Non-Sportbike Track Day (page 75) and seeing all the mature gentlemen in attendance. And what's with the lack of ladies at these track days? I thought motorcycling was on the rise with women.

I'm fortunate that I always ran in circles where I was the young guy. This afforded me the luxury of ribbing my best friends for being the old guys. So even to this day, no matter how old I get, around my riding buddies, I can still throw around the "you old guys" smack talk. To which I usually receive a reply starting with "Back in the day ..."

Time marches on, and looking around, I see towns that aren't as small as they used to be, buildings where pastures used to be, and people who aren't as spry as they once were. This thing happens, there's nothing you can do, just go with it. Like the saying goes: don't die before you're dead.

On the plus side of maturity is the respect I've received recently by friends and colleagues asking for advice. I guess they wouldn't ask for it if they didn't figure I had enough real life experience. While some universities tout that a degree from their school will give you a head start in the workplace, and I've seen my share of companies blindly (and unsuccessfully) putting faith in recent grad bookworms who can only reference numbers and statistics, I've also seen plenty of employment ads requiring applicants have years of real work experience in a given field. I guess it comes down to: who would you put your faith in? Someone who just closed a book? Or someone who has been around long enough to write the book?

Turning to the last page of Reg's book, I see "Avoid the 'Poor Me I'm Old' rut ... Old age is not a disease or a pitiful condition. It's a status ..." I say it's not old age. It's just an age. And so, that's what I'm attempting with this entry, just acknowledging the facts, taking a few jabs at them, and moving on. **M**



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everyone would do it.**



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Beyond the Café Racer



Motorcycle enthusiasts do no small amount of navel gazing. We're very aware of what's going on in the bike culture at large because any one of us is either in the new wave of biker cool or isn't. This either matters to a person or it doesn't, but I'd say even our apathy is strategic. For the past few years, the café racer saw a resurgence in the bike zeitgeist. That tide has gone out at this point, but what I think is interesting is not what's rolling in to replace it (the Scrambler du jour), but rather what's left on the proverbial beach.

I should clarify that when I say "café racer," I'm using that term as liberally as everyone else does. That is, what used to be a fairly narrow type of bike defined by specific criteria and heritage has become an appropriated shorthand for a much wider swath of custom motorcycles, both good and bad, vintage and modern. Ironically, it's only the traditional café racers that seem to be waning, in what custom builders are putting together and what people are sharing on Instagram and Facebook. I'm seeing a lot less checkerboard these days, even if the term *café racer* endures. The OEMs are like our parents. As soon as they decide something trendy is safe enough to embrace for the mainstream customer, it's probably over. Yesterday's devil music will play softly in the elevators of tomorrow.

I'm left wondering what's next. Predicting the future of motorcycling is a fool's errand. I'd much rather try to understand the present. As I look around the online motorcycle world, I'm seeing a handful of things, and they've gotten me excited.

First, more and more women are riding motorcycles. This year, we'll see the population of women motorcyclists surpass 25 percent of total riders in the US. It's an opportunity to tell new stories. It's an opportunity for motorcycling to evolve. And the arrival of women on the scene en masse couldn't have come at a better time. Why? Because of reason number two: by adding fresh blood and new riders to the mix, the entire motorcycle industry has a chance to grow instead of just limp along like it has been for the past few years. All that remains is for us not to screw this up. If we "shrink it and pink it," we've failed.

Third, we're seeing the European OEMs embrace not just personalization, but significant customization with factory-blessed options. Ducati launched a

whole subbrand with the Scrambler, and BMW is spawning a multibike lineup of customizable R nineT variants.

Fourth, I'm encouraged by how many people are getting their hands dirty and making their bikes their own. From simple bolt-on accessories to ambitious frame-up builds, more and more people are no longer spectating in the sport of bike building. I realize that this impulse isn't new, and I can't help but wonder if I'm simply more aware of it because of Instagram. Most don't really succeed. At best, they're decorating their bike, but who cares? Better to have tried and failed.

As a result of all this tinkering, it's actually novel to see a stock bike these days — especially a stock vintage bike. It's like stumbling upon some sort of rolling "before" picture. Seeing a stock 1979 Honda CX500 roll by is as much a head turner for me now as the most elaborate of custom bikes. If I might be foolish enough to dare a prediction, I'd say it will always be special to ride something old and unmolested. An original or unmodified restoration of an old Honda, for example, will always be a window into another time, and that will always be cool.

For me, perhaps, that's what the café racer resurgence left me with most of all: a new appreciation for the "before." **M**



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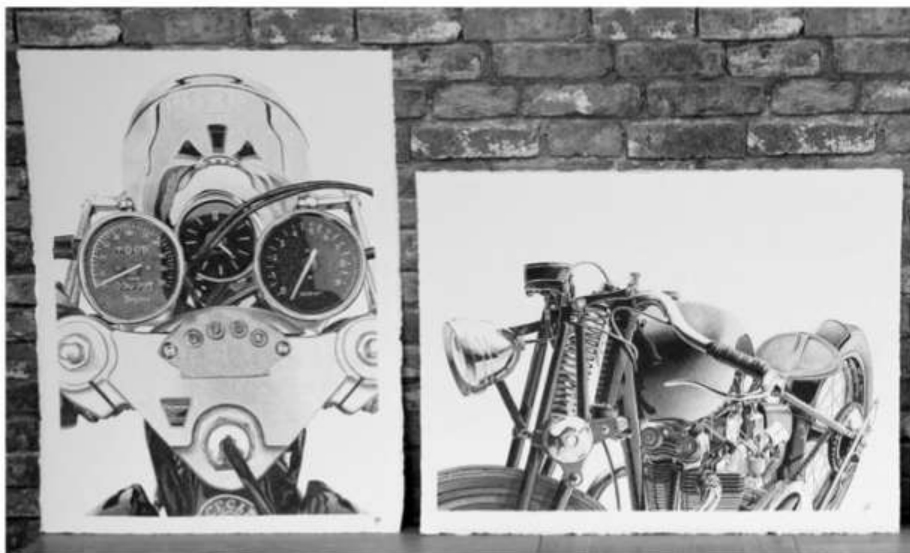
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200-Hour Work



I'm not a professional artist. At the beginning of 2014, my fiancé and I decided to take some time off work to travel, do some volunteering, and also use the time to enjoy ourselves in the run-up to our wedding. During this time, I was browsing Instagram and stumbled upon some amazing artists and decided to pick up a pen and paper and do some drawing myself. The last time I had done any serious artwork was around 14 years ago at school. Last year, I did some pictures of two bikes. I'm planning to do one or two more bike pieces to have a body of consistent work, but these pieces take up to 200 hours to do, so it's a slow process. I would love to transition into art full time, but I think this will be a long-term goal.

Dylan Griffiths
Surrey, UK

Only A Clutch Problem

I've been reading your magazine for several years. I have a 2006 Harley-Davidson 1200L Sportster Low. It has 159,000 miles on it, and the motor hasn't been worked on or been out of the frame. The clutch is original except for the space piece that Harley puts in. It came apart back in 2009 or '10, and I had it replaced since it was causing the clutch to act up. Keep up the good articles!

John A. Cauley Sr.
Via Internet

Tell It To The Preacher

I picked up your mag for the first time. I gotta' say, great cover shot of the Royal Enfield Continental GT for the July/August issue. I'll be a new subscriber for sure. I'm particularly asking about the black 'n' white pic on page 74 of the pair of riders for A Builder's Life by

Steven W-B. That photo tells the story, the opening that grabs you to read the article. I love these bikes and era. However, I'm quite naïve what the bikes as well. Seeing as I've been through Costa Rica and the Philippines, any article or road trip regarding Asia or dual-sport trips through Costa Rica or Nicaragua would be great. Asia and Central America seem to hold onto that riding culture as well.

John Gray
Via Internet **M**

On The Web



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In the Jan/Feb 2015 issue, Editor Steve Lita reviews the 2015 Victory Magnum. The Magnum features the tallest front wheel from any OEM manufacturer. Find out why Steve thinks Victory didn't just slap on a rim and let it go. The story is on our web site now!

Film

Matt Kendall and Tiernan Turner rode 10,000 miles from Las Vegas to Rio de Janeiro on home-built Suzukis and made a movie about it called *Ride Report: 10,000 Miles to Rio*. Read the article with Matt and Tiernan and the review of the film online.

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2016 Harley-Davidson Lineup

Increasing engine displacement and reinvigorating engine performance, improving handling, adding new color schemes and graphics, and refilling a hole with the triumphant return of a popular model are all part of Harley's 2016 lineup announcement. Oh, and, of course, some of these updates mean that there are new

bike designations, too.

Although the Road Glide family momentarily disappeared in 2014 (Touring and CVO categories included) when The Motor Company debuted its mountainous Project RUSHMORE update, Harley brought these sharknose baggers back the following year and added an extra shark for good measure: the Road Glide Special. These returning bikes also

came complete with variants of the RUSHMORE package. Leading the charge in 2015 was the CVO Road Glide Ultra. The Tour-Pak-equipped Road Glide Ultra, however, was only available as a CVO, meaning if you wanted a new Road Glide with a Tour-Pak, you had to fork over some serious bucks for the CVO amenities. While you definitely got more bang for these bucks, sometimes

you just want something a little less expensive (and a blanker canvas to work with). On top of that boost in price in 2015, this CVO was the most expensive bike that Harley had ever released up until that time.

Well, for 2016, Harley has brought the Road Glide Ultra back to its Touring line, thus completing the overall return of the Road Glide category. Now you can get a new Tour-Pak-equipped bagger with a fairing that stands out from Harley's sea of batwings. And the Touring Ultra costs way less than its CVO version. While the 2016 CVO Ultra is available for \$40,299, the 2016 Touring Ultra's price tag drops by almost 50 percent, \$25,699-\$26,999.

As for the rest of the 2016 Big Twin offerings, Harley's Softail family snagged most of the attention, especially when you look at these bikes' new-and-improved Twin Cams. Few Harley enthusiasts would disagree with the fact that bigger is better. That's probably why The Motor Company released a new platform, the S series, which is all about more displacement. As of now, the S series is comprised of the Fat Boy S and



Road Glide Ultra

Softail Slim S



Fat Boy S



Slim S Softails. Adding that S to these bikes' names means they have gone from the standard 103" engine to a Screamin' Eagle 110" Twin Cam. As for the other Softail engines, while still 103s, they receive the High Output treatment, which equates to a more powerful cam and a larger air intake. And every Softail also gets an electronic throttle. The two S models, as well as the

Heritage and Deluxe, come standard with electronic cruise control while electronic cruise control is an available option for the other Softails. Also worth noting is the Slim S' military-themed option, which comes in Olive Gold Denim.

Beyond the Big Twin realm, Harley's XL line has been relatively transformed, receiving some much-needed upgrades. I don't think

it's a stretch to say that while they're sweet bikes, Sportsters have, until now, been lacking in the comfort department. This year, their seating and front and rear suspensions have been upgraded to the point that will not only make them more comfortable but handle more efficiently. While each Sportster has a new optimized seating design for increased ergonomics, the big news is the suspension. The rear shocks now feature emulsion technology and can now be adjusted (preload adjustability with 50mm range). To support the new adjustability potential, Harley is including an under-seat, rear-shock adjustment wrench with each bike! As for the Sportsters' front ends, each fork, which is supported by a brace, comes with cartridge dampening technology. While impressive all around, leading the XL charge for 2016 are the Forty-Eight and Iron 833. On top of receiving some extra cosmetic love, both feature lighter weight, split, nine-spoke, cast aluminum wheels that massage out the entire feel of the ride more so than the other updated Sportsters. Harley also beefed up the Forty-Eight's front end to the 49mm unit found on Dynas; that's 10mm more when compared to the rest of the line's 39mm forks. And thicker forks

mean less flex and sturdier suspension components, making for a more comfortable and better handling motorcycle.

Harley has always been a huge advocate for the military as well as police and fire departments nationwide. The Motor Company's history of supporting these men and women goes back almost since the manufacturer's inception. Harley's first motorcycle for police duty was delivered to the police department in Detroit, in 1908. And Harley manufactured 1/3 of its motorcycles for the US military during World War I and 90,000 WLA models for military use in World War II. This year, Harley is continuing this tradition by releasing 2016 Police/Fire/Rescue Road Kings and Electra Glides, each in 10 color options.

And, of course, what doesn't immediately say "new" than bikes with updated paint schemes? On top of the overall 2016 lineup's new palettes, two-tones, custom colors, and Hard Candy Custom paint schemes all across the board, most Harley Big Twins now come with pinstriping options, too, to even further distinguish these new Harleys. While all of these updates mean that most if not all of these new bikes are more expensive than last year's, I think it's safe to say that you're getting your money's worth. **M**



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THE MISSING LINK

BRIDGING THE GAP (BETWEEN THE GS AND THE S)





Is it supersport-adventuring or adventure-supersporting? BMW has redefined the market for the big-bore touring road bike. Always with a finger on the pulse, if not driving it, BMW has taken notice of the competition surrounding its “Swiss Army knife” R 1200 GS, and the German manufacturer upped the ante with yet another masterful machine we didn’t see coming. Sure, we knew about the S 1000 XR last year from concepts and unveilings, but it wasn’t until this summer that media got to ride the machine.

Trends and cycles being what they are, when the water boxer came along, no doubt BMW lost a few RT buyers to the GS for its ability to both tour just as well on and off the pavement. But BMW also sees the emerging trends as well, and has built the XR to appeal to the adventure-minded rider who actually stays on the pavement.

With competition growing from OEMs like Ducati, Aprilia, and Kawasaki, both the sport-touring king R 1200 RT and adventure-master R 1200 GS needed an update. Now wading in waters where many other upright rocket ships hold court, the GS became second choice to buyers looking for a sportier sport-tourer like the Ducati Multistrada or Aprilia Tuono, despite the GS’ ability to keep up and go well beyond. Enter the gap in which BMW felt needed filling ... the “adventure-sport-touring” segment.

Instead of merely adding more horsepower to the GS or putting the RT on a diet, BMW chose to leave the “new” machine as it is. Instead, engineers dug out the S 1000 roadster mockups, piled on a few more pounds of clay, and created a machine specifically designed to appeal to Multistrada buyers. Taking a scalpel to the market, the guys at BMW hope to slice off another piece of the pie for themselves, specifically looking for buyers who weren’t already in their showrooms.

With aggressive “off-road” looks and the heart of a track day bike, the new S 1000 XR is a wolf in sheep’s clothing, not unlike what we first learned of the GS at the onset of its makeover in 2012, but now more so. It’s a gentleman’s sport-tourer, with the same powerplant and specs of BMW’s race machine, sprinkled with the angular and flashy good looks of the Italian competition ... imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, they say.

Filling a high-performance niche as only the fourth member of the 999cc straight four-cylinder engine family, the XR brings together the dynamic touring capabilities







with high horsepower to create a whole new beast.

Having been my first ride on BMW's S motor in any form, feeling just a little bit scared and excited at the same time, I could see the purebred history hidden beneath the high bars and tall fairing. Boasting 160 hp and 83 ft-lbs. of torque, with a claimed wet weight of only 503 pounds, the XR feels

more like a dirt bike than a GS. And that's an image that needs to be shaken from my mind, as this machine isn't a dual-sport, despite its looks; the XR is designed to be a streetbike. Given the styling, some of us will put it in the ADV camp, others will mentally put it in the paddock, with the XR shining the brightest somewhere between these two worlds.

Although BMW considers the XR a bridge between its GS and S lines, it's a heavily asymmetrical mix. Even the engineers consider the XR only 5 percent "enduro" with the inclusion of the XR being on 17" wheels and road-going Bridgestone Battlax 3s. But engineers also didn't hesitate to let the journalists decide for themselves by leading the group through the wooded forests and over packed-earth roadways.

Is the S 1000 XR the German version of an Italian adventure-sports? That's a highly engineered "Yes." Some editors on our ride were comparing the XR to supersports such as the Honda CBR1000RR, but I'm coming at this from a different angle. Traveling directly from the high-altitude trails of northern Utah to the Muskoka Lakes community of Ontario, Canada, my mind wants to compare the XR to its sister bike and world-traveler, the R 1200 GS.

Similar only in style, however, the XR merely steals the comfortable riding position and quickly looks away. In short, the GS has a bigger engine and less horsepower (but more torque), with more weight (only 20 pounds), nearly 1-1/2"-2-1/2" more wheel travel both front and rear, and is 1" longer in wheelbase ... perhaps I should say it's more of a heavy uncle than a sister in the catalog.

And although the XR doesn't have any such enduro riding mode, diehards can disable the ABS and traction control for the occasional



2016 BMW S 1000 XR	
LIST PRICE	Starting at \$16,350
ENGINE	Liquid-cooled, in line four
VALVETRAIN	DOHC, four valves per cylinder
DISPLACEMENT	999cc
BORE X STROKE	80mm x 49.7mm
COMPRESSION RATIO	12.0:1
FUEL SYSTEM	EFI
MFR HORSEPOWER	160 hp @ 11000 rpm
MFR TORQUE	83 ft.-lbs. @ 9250 rpm
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed
FINAL DRIVE	Chain
FRONT SUSPENSION	46mm, upside-down fork, compression and rebound adjustable; optional Dynamic ESA
REAR SUSPENSION	Aluminum two-sided swingarm, rebound adjustable; optional Dynamic ESA
FRONT TIRE	120/70 ZR-17"
REAR TIRE	190/55 ZR-17"
FRONT BRAKES	BMW Motorrad ABS, switchable and part integral; twin floating 320mm discs, radial four-piston calipers; optional ABS Pro
REAR BRAKE	BMW Motorrad ABS, switchable and part integral; single 265mm disc, twin-piston floating caliper; optional ABS Pro
OVERALL LENGTH	85.94"
WHEELBASE	60.94"
RAKE/TRAIL	64-1/2 degrees/4.6"
SEAT HEIGHT	33.07"
FUEL CAPACITY	5.3 gallons
AVERAGE MPG	44 mpg
WET WEIGHT	502 pounds
WARRANTY	36 months/36,000 miles
2016 COLORS	Racing Red, Light White

gravel road with the correct set of options and button presses, but more on that to come.

Packed with both touring- and sport-minded features, the aluminum trellis frame and two-sided swingarm come sourced from the S 1000 R (not the race-spec RR), carrying the same liquid-cooled engine as a stressed member as well. Tying that powerplant to the road are a stack of sensors, wires, and ideas worth noting. The base XR model comes standard with a pair of riding modes (Rain and Road) and Automatic Stability Control (ASC), BMW's system designed to adjust throttle application based on front and rear wheel speed differentials. But if you truly want to experience what the XR can do, pay the extra cash and get the Premium package and Ride Modes Pro (RMP), which includes two more riding modes (Dynamic and Dynamic-Pro), Dynamic Traction Control (DTC, replacing the ASC), and ABS Pro, the latter containing the bank-angle sensor. Previously, the cornering ABS package was available only for the HP4 and only after the sale as an upgrade. Now it's being offered as a factory option, which is a first for BMW, by *automagically* computing the highest possible application of braking pressure allowed by the chosen ride mode and applying it while also maintaining the cornering lean. This keeps you on the roadway

instead of towards the shoulder of the road, guardrail, or parked car, preventing the typical braking scenario of straightening up the bike in order to stop it.

Baseline, the standard Rain and Road ride modes offer preset throttle sensitivity and suspension setups. But with the upgrade to RMP comes the fancier ride science, including higher slip thresholds from the ABS systems and differing levels of wheel-lift intervention, depending upon your mode choice: the Dynamic Pro mode, requiring a coding plug à la Enduro Pro mode on the larger GS models. The RMP package also gives the rider choices in traction control (including full disengagement) with a front wheel-lift detection and both firm and dynamic suspension modes when equipped with the optional D-ESA package (included with the top-shelf Premium model).

The Dynamic ESA setup is also seen again in the 1200 GS and includes three preload settings (Solo, Solo Luggage, Duo) and two damping settings: Road (comfort) and Dynamic (firm). In the XR's case, the Dynamic ESA also talks to the bank-angle sensor and inputs from the throttle-position sensor, as well as the DTC, ABS, and the spring-travel sensor to give you the most dynamic and smoothest ride possible ... at all times.

After swinging a leg over the 33.1" stock dished saddle, this 32" inseam



rider found himself tip-toe at the traffic signal. But once it's been loaded with saddlebags and a pillion, it'll be perfect. For those who need the help right out of the gate, there's a no-cost low saddle (32.3") option, plus the ability to purchase a low-suspension package as well (31.1" ultimate) for \$220. However, in order for the low saddle to fit, you have to buy the Dynamic ESA system (if not the Premium package). For the doorway-challenged riders, there's a high saddle option as well (33.7").

Between you and the road lies the two-piece instrument panel with an informative LCD panel to the right of a big, bright tachometer (lap timer, too!), reminding you that this is a race machine with a comfortable seating position and a Powerlet port in the fairing for powering your favorite farkles.



Reach over the dash to manually adjust the two-position windscreen, and take your time doing so; give your hands a moment to rest from the engine's vibrations passing through the wide handlebars ... it never seems to go away. Although it might smooth out over 10 grand, I wouldn't know, as these units being brand-new machines — some with single-

digit odometer readings — the 10000 rpm rev limiter was further limited to 9000 rpm, well below the claimed peak horsepower and torque figures.

BMW chose the scenic Ontario, Canada, countryside to simultaneously reveal two new models to the media: the R 1200 RS and the S 1000 XR, under rainy skies and over a myriad of road conditions. As a seasonal vacation spot, harsh winters leave major frost heaves on the more interesting roads, testing both the rider and the suspension setups. Luckily, the dynamic setup of the fully equipped XRs ate that stuff up. And where the pavement

ended completely, BMW didn't let the adventure bike styling stop along with it, instead allowing and leading us on more than 30 percent of our total ride though the forests and over graded gravel roads, through which the XR raced along with technological grace with 5.9"/5-1/2" of suspension travel front and rear respectively and disabled ABS and traction control. BMW was smart enough to let us have fun and not throw it away at the same time. Ticking off the traction control during such a spirited ride over a bumpy landscape had more than a few us airborne on occasion. What a ride! The dynamic package is a must-have accessory!

In the corners and on the gas, the character of the S 1000's transmission takes some getting used to. "Notchy" might be too harsh, but I'm also not used to race machines between my legs. Stiff.

While making the far-off reach to the levers, despite the adjustability from far to an even farther reach, the braking feel is stout and strong; a single finger feels more powerful than ever. Meanwhile, the feeling from the rear brake pedal is minimal, yet the affect is similarly strong.

The 2016 S 1000 XR is available in two colors: white and, for those excited to trick their friends into thinking they bought a Ducati (with a silencer), there's no charge for the additional virtual horsepower in the Red option.



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The standard base model's MSRP is \$16,350 and includes switchable ABS, stability control, two ride modes, and a list of BMW goodies worth having. The Standard Package (yet again with the confusing nomenclature ...) is the first step in upgrades and includes heated grips, cruise control, saddlebag mounts, and GPS preparation for \$17,295.

The Premium package is what most buyers will purchase (or aspire to), and includes a pair of feature groups, the Dynamic package and the Touring package. The dynamic group includes DTC, ABS Pro, Ride Modes Pro, Gear Shift Assist Pro, and cruise control. Meanwhile, the touring kit adds the Dynamic ESA functions, heated grips, cruise control, centerstand, luggage rack, saddlebag mounts, and GPS prep, all for \$18,750. You can also shop à la carte, but you'll probably have to wait for a

special shipment from Germany to get the exact bike you want, and, in the end, will surely cost you more as well. BMW's got it all laid out to work out better for you ... nothing new here.

Refined in more ways than one, don't be surprised to see the 2016 S 1000 XR in more than a few comparison tests, in more than one segment. Will it replace your 1200 GS? The short answer is no, if you're one of the few who actually goes beyond Starbucks. If you're in it for the sport, you've got some decisions to make! **M**

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Motocross Illustrated by Steven Wyman-Blackburn

Sometimes the title of a work tells more about its contents than you might think. In the case of *The Art of Moto*, a documentary on all things motocross, what writer/director/producer Mark Homan came up with is a darned good one. For starters, the word *moto* doesn't pigeonhole motosport by separating it from motorcycling. Moto keeps it all in the family. In fact, one of the film's major discourses is how motocross differs (read more extreme) than other sports, not from other aspects of two-wheel culture. There's an underlining message that there's a shared danger and camaraderie in the realm of motorcycles both on and off the dirt.

Secondly, the definition of art encompasses a pretty broad spectrum of possible meanings. Here's a possible alternative title: *The Story of Moto*. While bland, it has potential, seeing as there are remnants of a timeline in the documentary that discusses the beginnings of the sport and both how and why it evolved over time by scrutinizing the race as it is today, all of which is complemented with shots of black and white photos, newspaper clippings, and even some old-time reel footage. However, the best way to understand motocross is by knowing the emotions of the motocross racers, which Mark obliges throughout his film.

The art in *The Art of Moto* not only signifies the vari-

ables associated with the sport and how they're expressed but how the culture is captured on camera and then presented. The beginning of the movie follows the trends of and utilizes the strategies we've all seen in other documentaries. You have the

opening scene: an epic score and dramatic close-ups of clips altered to a brown and white haze for added effect that depicts a rider preparing for a motocross race as the narrator's booming voice (Mark) underscores the techniques and inherent charisma that are a necessity for any given participant to not only succeed but survive. Classic

propaganda. This intro is followed by the very essence of motocross itself — action shots from actual races — as the big names in the industry share their thoughts on the hardships in typical documentary fashion: interviews in “talking heads” format. It's during this time when we

+ *Stupendous editing and sound splicing.*

+ *You feel as though you get an honorary doctorate in motocross.*

— *Some may want traditional documentary structure.*

SOURCES

The Art of Moto
Rent digital, \$4.99;
Buy digital, \$12.99;
DVD, \$24.95
TheArtof
MotoFilm.com

hear from the likes of Roger De Coster, five-time 500cc world champion, who says “You need to be able to take some pain.” Other motocross racers who make an appearance are Ricky Carmichael, 10-time AMA Outdoor national champion; Gary Jones, four-time AMA national champion; Chuck Sun, 1980 AMA 500cc national champion, and many others.

Mark allows the viewer to get up close and personal with moto celebrities. It drags you in. And if you're already a huge fan, then you're fully ensconced.

But even during this first segment, the viewer has already witnessed a foreshadowing of what's to come. For one, Mark takes his role as narrator a few steps out of the shadows just a few minutes in by allowing himself to have a distinct voice. Rather than just acting as “the unseen speaker of facts,” he actually shares his personal thoughts, like when he relates his first memories of motocross: “I was 14 when I was first introduced. I pictured myself out there. From then on, it was in my blood.” This adds another layer of authenticity to an already authentic film.

The true artistry of *The Art of Moto*, however, is how Mark accumulates all of the facts. The culmination manifests in probably the most effective way possible: one long, uncut scene from a motocross race. But this race isn't just a garbled mess nor is it random. Leading up to it, Mark first categorizes essential anecdotes and facts that both define and explain the culture of motocross in chapters: The History, The Track, Technology, AMA National Championship Series, The Money, FIM World Championship Series, and WMA Championship Series. Like any effective story, each chapter feeds from the one preceding, and like a snowball effect, this knowledge, which is still clear in your mind, follows suit, spilling into this racing footage. Here, the viewer takes this information and uses it to enhance every element of the racing experience as he's led through about 15 minutes of sheer awesomeness, which is more effective than just watching a collage of riding shots, all digested and spit out on YouTube a multitude of times.

And while this continuous scene plays out, Mark employs more editing techniques. Yes, you're watching the pandemonium that is motocross racing, but you're being exposed to this chaos while racers narrate it. But rather than the camera switching back and forth from the action shots to footage of the interviewed rider in some random room, Mark keeps the camera on the race. The only indication of who's speaking is revealed through a caption at the bottom of the screen.

This isn't to say, however, that the race is shown the same way throughout. Mark meticulously presents it in varying styles that convey different tones in accordance to what's happening in the race. These methods either embellish the moment all for the sake of entertainment or augment the aspect of reality so that we may momentarily experience it vicariously. The first section is a sensory overload of noises from the circuit, the second includes a rocking soundtrack (the full song, actually), and then the third and fourth delve into silence, emulating the contemplative, almost visceral moments. As stated, each technique further articulates each definitive part of the race: the anticipation before it begins, the moment

when the bar drops, the all-out mayhem of clustered riders gummed together fighting for the lead, and what racers call either “the zone” or “finding the flow.”

Best of all, this 15-minute racing scene is only the first of two. As if Mark is trying to outperform his first attempt, he brings even more elements to the table (some darker themes) before showing the second long racing segment. But rather than explaining it all, I should let you do as Mark suggests. Near the end, Mark asks whether motocross is actually the hardest sport, to which he responds by saying “There's only really one way to find out.” Scene cut to a racer kick-starting his bike. **M**



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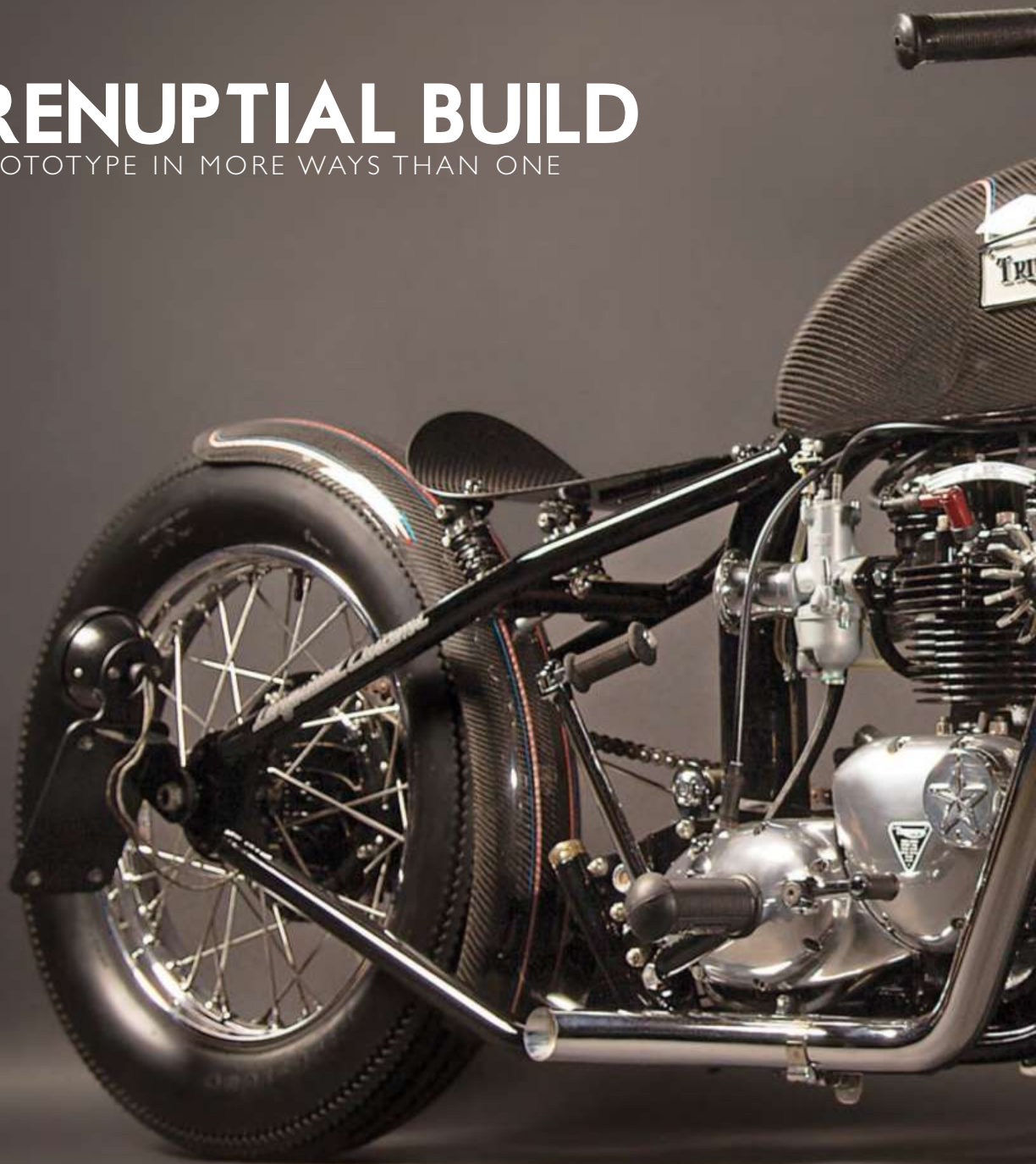
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PRENUPTIAL BUILD

A PROTOTYPE IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE





F

or those who've had the misfortune of being subjected to *License to Wed*, a chick flick if ever I saw one about a prewedding crash course, this custom build story should put you on the steady road to recovery. Replace the corny lines with specially fabricated carbon fiber parts, exchange the horrible soundtrack with rumblin' Cycle Shack exhaust pipes, and swap out the sappy words of apology that the guy forms in the sand to get the girl back (sorry, I spoiled the ending) with a motorcycle wedding this past August, and you've got Justin Reid of Longwood Customs, his recently wed wife, Jessica, and this 1972 Triumph Bonneville custom.

While this custom Bonnie was built with the supplies, intel, and skills accumulated from the years Longwood Customs has been in business (since 2011), every part tells a very different story. This isn't the archetypal tale of a man who has to give up on his dreams to accommodate the many, many needs (demands) of the missus. It's about a woman who embraces not only her husband's livelihood, but his passion, all done before the official hitching day, a truly badass prenuptial course. More badass than that "movie."

Like all great matches made in motorcycle heaven by the great biker god in the sky, Justin is undoubtedly the

person/builder he is today because of his better half. Not saying there wasn't any effort on Justin's part; his first project was a 1974 Norton 850 Commando that he built when he was 22-years-old in 2008. Back in the day, Justin was also a car guy, a fast car guy. And liking fast cars and being a teenager make for an interesting story. "I was always getting into trouble," recalls Justin, "having the cops call my house at two in the



morning, trying to tell my mom what I had done.” This love for fast cars soon transitioned to a love for fast motorcycles because he was getting passed by bikes all the time, and he couldn’t have that. After going through the required rite of passage that is a young kid and his bike, i.e. “being obnoxious and crazy on the streets,” Justin started polarizing towards the other end of the spectrum, old-school motorcycles. Soon he founded Longwood Customs.

Now I’m not saying Jessica was the one who set Justin straight or nudged him towards safer riding habits (while quite possibly true). I’m saying that Jessica is marrying who Justin has become. And a big part of who Justin is as a builder is, quite literally, spelled out on his business’ Facebook page: “To build badass Triumph bobbers and cafés for people to enjoy and ride the \$#!+ out of.” Justin elaborates: “It’s about inspiring the younger generation of what you can do with these older bikes because there are so many of these bikes sitting in somebody’s garage.”

On the surface, Justin’s creations are just that, bobbers and café racers, especially Triumphs. Look closer and you’ll see that they are long and low (with a 6” stretch and 4” drop in the frame), sleek, and relatively streamlined. And then there’s the element of carbon fiber. “It’s not the kind of New-Age product that you think would be integrated into the classic or vintage motorcycle world,” Justin says. But more on that later.

While personalizing a bike is important, it’s also important to keep some essence of what makes the Triumph a Triumph. One component in particular that Justin likes to keep is the tank. Not necessarily stock per se, but within the era the bike was originally manufactured. And on this Bonneville, Jessica and Justin were able to do just that ... to a degree. But, again, more on that later.

As for Jessica, this isn’t her first bike; she was initiated into the realm of motorcycling years ago (she has a 2011 Triumph 675R and has also been riding dirt bikes for awhile). This Triumph is, however, Jessica’s inaugural kick into the customizing side of motorcycling. And she kicked it alright. “She actually came to me about this bike,” recalls Justin. Rather than just wanting to understand what Justin does, Jessica wanted to take it a step further. “She said ‘I want to do this with you.’” This decision is, in all truth, just as crucial as saying “I do.” Suffice to say, the bike, an eBay find, was soon purchased and in Longwood Customs territory.

In addition to having “obvious excitement over her new toy,” what Justin finds so cool about the whole building process is that while he, of course, guided her, Jessica seemed to have already been further along than those who generally enter the customizing ring for the first time. “Her favorite part out of the whole thing was taking a Sawzall to the frame and literally cutting the bike in half,” Justin relates proudly. This is unusual



TECH SPECS

OWNER Jessica Reid
BUILDERS Justin and Jessica Reid, Longwood Customs, South Plainfield, NJ
YEAR/MODEL 1972 Triumph Bonneville
CHROMER/PAINTER Longwood Customs
PINSTRIPER Greg Ross

ENGINE/CHASSIS

DISPLACEMENT 750cc big-bore kit
CARBS AMAL Premiers
IGNITION Kickstart, BH Hanson electric
CHARGING SYSTEM 220 watts
AIR CLEANER Velocity stacks
EXHAUST Cycle Shack, adaptors in heads
FRAME Stock/The Factory Metal Works rigid rear-end kit
STRETCH 6”, lowered 4”
FRONT SUSPENSION Stock, lowered 2-1/2”
FRONT WHEEL Stock 19”, stainless spokes, powdercoated

REAR WHEEL Stock 18”, stainless spokes, powdercoated
FRONT TIRE Avon Speedmaster
REAR TIRE Coker Firestone replica
FRONT BRAKE Drum
REAR BRAKE Drum
REAR FENDER Lowbrow Customs, customized by Longwood Customs, carbon fiber

ACCESSORIES

HEADLIGHT HID
TAILLIGHT Cycle Shack, finned Ford taillight
FUEL TANK Carbon fiber
HANDLEBARS EMGO, low rise, black
SEAT Chopper Shox, fabricated by Longwood Customs, carbon fiber
TAG BRACKET Cycle Shack Standard, axle mount



because, as Justin explains, it normally takes some time before someone gets used to something like chopping a bike. “When she had the opportunity to sit there with a saw and cut the frame in half, it was a pretty exhilarating thing for her.”

Heck with kicking. More like a karate chop to the face.

Even though the bike was sent out for sandblasting and then to Greg Ross for pinstriping, everything else was done in house, including the motor teardown and rebuild. With the chassis literally cut in two, the now-chopped-off rear half of the bike was replaced with a rigid weld-on kit from The Factory Metal Works. And to complement Justin’s/Longwood Customs’ proprietary 4” drop to the frame, the rear suspension followed suit, dropped by 2-1/2”.

In regards to Justin’s preference of having OEM parts on his bikes, the wheels are original (with some powdercoating and stainless spokes). And, yes, the tank is, as Justin prefers, period-correct, save for one slight detail: it’s all carbon fiber.

As Justin told me, he’s been incorporating this material on his bikes for awhile. But what makes this bike different is that this Triumph’s bodywork is entirely made of carbon fiber, a first for a Longwood Customs bobber. It’s only appropriate that this was tried out on Jessica’s first contribution to the business.

That said, when it comes to the carbon fiber rear ribbed fender and seat, while custom-made in house, they emulate the shape of components from other builders, Lowbrow Customs and Chopper Shox, Las Vegas, respectively. After creating molds for each, what began as aluminum and steel parts became solid carbon fiber. While the new fender went on the Bonneville fine, the same can’t be said about

the seat. See, Chopper Shox seats require specially made mounts to be welded onto the seats and the frame. Of course, the mounts work with Dave’s steel seats, but they don’t work with a carbon fiber rendition.

However, as you can see, this ain’t a saddleless ride; Justin and Jessica fabricated their own top brackets for the mounts by drilling and tapping them to fit the application.

What’s really interesting (besides being solid carbon fiber) is that the seat and rear fender are hopefully going to be part of a future parts line of carbon fiber components by Longwood Customs. So Jessica’s bike is, in essence, a running prototype for these pieces.

Again, all of this was accomplished before the wedding. And this bike along with Justin’s other bikes were in the ceremony. Talk about wedding planning!

“It takes a certain type of person to be able to understand and work with the headaches and aggravation and competition of starting your own business,” says Justin in closing. “I’m lucky that she has been very supportive of me and stood by my side the whole time and understands everything.”

I think it’s time for a new film. Let’s call it Build to Wed. **M**

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Once Bitten

Still Shy





I try to avoid using rock lyrics in stories because it's the easy way out for writers. But in this story, it takes a bit of a merry-go-round ride. I'll bet you saw the title of this story and thought of the rock classic *Once Bitten, Twice Shy*. There. It's stuck in your head now, isn't it? I hope you hum it all day. Originally performed by Ian Hunter, the song became even more popular when it was covered by the rock band Great White. Which leads to a shark analogy between the song title and that band's name, which then opens the question: why do Harley enthusiasts call the Road Glide a "sharknose" anyway? And as best as I can determine, it's because it looks like one.

Truth be told, the true meaning of the proverb "once bitten, twice shy" is something has gone wrong, and you should be more careful next time. Aha! And that, my friends, is unfortunately how I feel about the new Harley-Davidson Road Glide Special. More details in a moment.

Long a favorite model of mine, I spent many a mile crisscrossing the country a few years ago aboard a long-term press loaner. I have nary a bad memory of that bike. And that's with full knowledge that it had a smaller, and underpowered, engine than the current model and a marginal and underpowered sound system as well. Okay, thinking back, maybe there were a couple of sticking points with it. But because of my time spent on that bike, given the choice between the frame-mounted-fairing

Road Glide or a fork-mounted-fairing Street Glide, I would always select the former. I find the styling, handling, and ergonomics more desirable than on the quite similar sister bike, the Street Glide.

We've all seen the upgrades and tweaks made by Project RUSHMORE. The last-gen Road Glide took a one-year hiatus during the introduction of Project RUSHMORE, but, alas, it's back, with improvements and some pitfalls. There are two models available: the standard Road Glide and the Road Glide Special, which we got our hands on.

Now it's the middle of the night on the open road ...

The first thing you notice on the new Road Glide sharknose is the futuristic take on the shark's nose. A new frame-mounted fairing shaped by the wind (more like engineers in a wind tunnel) houses some seriously strong LED headlight technology. Someone did his



homework here. The new fairing shape came about by using computational fluid dynamics, hundreds of hours of wind-tunnel development at Wichita State University in Kansas, and real-world road testing. Three large vents (two on the sides and one at the top center) duct air through the fairing with easily closable trapdoors to help the rider change the air pressure behind the fairing and tailor wind flow to the





passenger cockpit, which helps reduce head buffeting. The vents are large and work fairly well at speed. And not only does the fairing maintain airflow around the rider but also directs cooling air to the engine.

Both dual reflector Daymaker LED headlights shine a distinctive and bright white high- and low-beam that gains attention from other motorists and illuminates the roadway supremely. Compared to the

last-gen Road Glide, these new headlights deliver up to 67 percent more light spread across the road and 25 percent more light farther down the road. The former Road Glides had separate twin headlights, but now a single composite headlight carries two bulbs. A single lens over the lights improves the aerodynamics, allowing the entire fairing to be narrowed by 1.4" to further reduce drag and increase efficiency.

Behind the fairing, a new handlebar bend locates the grips 5-1/2" closer to the rider and offers a new wrist angle for improved comfort. And the Road Glide Special model has an exclusive gloss black painted inner fairing



(denim on Black Denim models). Other rider compartment features include standard cruise control and new ergonomic hand controls with improved tactile feel. Out back, air ride rear suspension is standard as are Project RUSHMORE One-Touch latch-equipped hard saddlebags.

There are no major powertrain changes with the return of the shark. It's the standard Touring High Output Twin Cam 103 V-twin engine backed by a six-speed trans. Some front suspension improvements came with the return of this model: 49mm forks, stiffer triple clamps, and larger steering bearings. The 19" front cast aluminum wheel was an upgrade a few years ago, and a matching-style 16" holds up the rear.

The Road Glide Special is distinguished from the base

model by several components. First, ABS and a security system are stock on the Special, but will set you back almost \$1,200 on the base model as options. Reflex Linked brakes with ABS, a rough-riding hand-adjustable low-profile rear suspension, and some basic hand-applied pinstripes are also stock on the Special. Finally, the quick-tell is the center dash-mounted Boom! Box 6.5GT infotainment system with touch screen and GPS navigation. Thumb-operated five-way joysticks on both of the hand controls can get some search and click functions done while on the move, making it more convenient than having to reach way up to the touch screen while underway. There are two fairing storage compartments with flip-up doors and a rubber-lined media compartment





with USB connection in the right side of the inner fairing. While a vast improvement over the last-gen Road Glide's automotive-style radio head, I find the new touch screen device



to be lacking in some ways. There are some minor engine monitoring functions that can be accessed, but it's not comprehensive. I find the GPS to be nonintuitive to operate and overall radio reception and sound quality to be sub-par. I mean, you have this huge color display screen in front of your face; there should be tons that can be done with it. It's just a display screen. The information being displayed comes from various sources. I say feed the screen more data to display. Where's the tire pressure monitor? Where's the fuel level, mileage, and average calculations? Where's the comprehensive engine performance information? There's an analog volt meter on the dash. What a waste of space that is. What is this, 1948? Make the voltage information accessible in a menu displayed on the screen, and then maybe I can see an actual measurement of voltage instead of a bobbing needle.

I guess, overall, that's the frustration I feel about the entire rerelease of the Road Glide. It disappeared from the lineup for an entire year and came back with minor warmed-over features. You mean to tell me these changes couldn't be made as a running model changeover? Sure, the headlights rock. Great. But the rest of the bike is the same-old bike. Where's the next generation of cool stock Harley bagger I was expecting? Harley had a chance to really wow me, and it didn't. I don't think I'm being too harsh on The Motor Company for not knocking my socks off. I guess Harley played it safe and went with a "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" approach. And yet, after coming back down to Earth and given my choices, the Road Glide is still my selection from the Harley-Davidson Touring bike lineup. **M**



2015 HARLEY-DAVIDSON ROAD GLIDE SPECIAL	
LIST PRICE	\$23,699
ENGINE	Air-cooled, High Output Twin Cam V-twin
VALVETRAIN	Pushrod, two valves per cylinder
DISPLACEMENT	103.1" (1690cc)
BORE X STROKE	98.4mm x 111.1mm
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.7:1
FUEL SYSTEM	Electronic Sequential Port Fuel Injection (ESPFI)
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed Cruise Drive
FINAL DRIVE	Belt
FRONT SUSPENSION	49mm, telescopic, nonadjustable
REAR SUSPENSION	Dual shock, hand preload adjustable
FRONT TIRE	Dunlop H-D Series 130/60B-19"
REAR TIRE	Dunlop H-D Series 180/65B-16"
FRONT BRAKES	Reflex Linked ABS; dual 300mm discs, dual four-piston calipers
REAR BRAKE	Reflex Linked ABS; 300mm disc, four-piston caliper
OVERALL LENGTH	95.6"
WHEELBASE	64"
RAKE/TRAIL	26 degrees/6.8"
SEAT HEIGHT	27.4"
FUEL CAPACITY	6 gallons
CURB WEIGHT	849 pounds
WARRANTY	24 months
2015 COLORS	Vivid Black, Amber Whiskey, Black Denim, Superior Blue



DESCENT INTO THE HOLE

FINDING SANITY ON TWO WHEELS IN THE BLEAK DARKNESS OF WINTER



THE WAY WE DO THINGS IN AMERICA

isn't the same as how things are done abroad. For instance, I don't think we have a rally where it's a good idea to have a bike with a sidecar, not cuz you would undoubtedly win some vintage points, especially if it's period-correct, but "because it's easier to carry camp equipment and it's impossible to fall on icy roads;" where many of the bikes have, instead of stock or aftermarket windshields, detergent bottles that have been shaped as such because they're easier to repair; where you're just as likely to see the latest adventure bike as well as an "old and rusty Moto Guzzi with animal bones screwed everywhere;" where one of the most necessary tools to have on your person is a chainsaw (you're the crazy one for not having one and for only bringing a wrench); where you're awarded not with a sparkly trophy for your pretty bike, but decorated in a heavy chain of metal plates like a hero, which hang from your hat or jacket, bestowed upon you only if you were brave enough to return; where the only way to keep you from descending into madness at night is by huddling around a fire, drinking more booze than your bike can hold gas, and singing





in a manner, which I can only hope is like the haunting, bone-chilling Misty Mountains song in *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*. At least, I don't think there's anything like that over here.

Here in the good ol' US of A, Harleys are the king of the road, and increasing cubic inches is our claim to fame. From our offices here in Stamford, Connecticut, to the West Coast, you're more likely to see a Street Glide or Road King than a BMW adventure-tourer or a KTM enduro bike. It's cruiser land filled with more metal, less plastic.

When it snows, we leave the adventuring to four wheels or more, and even then, we freak the hell out whenever our tires slip even for only a moment ... unless you're from Maine. As such, when we rally, we rally under the sun (or prefer to do so). It sucks when it rains. If it snows? Forget about it.

In fact, during the winter months in the Northeast, our moto highlight is the International Motorcycle Show at the Javits Center in New York City, *inside* the Javits Center, under an *insulated roof* with *electric heat*. In fact, we only stumble out of hibernation when Daytona Bike Week comes around, which, I should note, is in the Sunshine State, as far south as you can go in America except for the bottom tip of Texas or if you take a boat trip to Key West or Hawaii.

By March when Bike Week in Daytona begins, the only snow being talked about is the perpetually coming winter in *Game of Thrones*. We hate snow. And our motorcycles hate it, too.

Maybe it's something in the water (or, in this case,

snow and ice), but over in Germany, there's a rally that's contingent on, yes, there being motorcycles, but motorcycles that have been painstakingly transformed into machines that can successfully ferry one past the threshold into a realm where no wheels should tread, machines that will soon be encrusted with snow and require, upon your survival of said rally, being thawed under a heat light (because there's no sun) for at least a few days. It's all about suffering through the trials and tribulations that come with taking your bike into the wilderness and freezing your ass off in a place "where snow is guaranteed, where you should never be alone." Welcome to Elefantentreffen.

The person who described the rally as a gathering where snow is paramount for its operation is Alessandro D'Angelo. The Elefantentreffen rally takes place on the first weekend in February or the last weekend in January in a valley between the towns of Thurmansbang and Solla in the Bavarian Forest. And you're there for three days. Just the





description sounds desolate.

Even more so for Alessandro. It should also be noted that he wasn't even involved with the rally or even knew of its existence until the winter of 2013-14 when he first went into the unknown, after he was advised by a mechanic to go there if he wanted to see a true biker. Since immersing himself in the insanity, he's never been the same. He's now, as he said, bound to it.

The name of the rally, also referred to as the Elephant Rally, was chosen to exemplify the motorcycle culture of that area when the rally first began, more notably a bike that was "a main protagonist" during World War II (much like the US' Harley-Davidson WLAs). Near the Elephant Rally's beginning, the majority of bikes that rally-goers (who Alessandro affectionately described as masochists and sub-zero filth monkeys) chose were Zündapp KS601 combos, also known as Green Elephants, a derivative of the machine's designation.

The Elephant Rally began as an emergency meeting of winter-resilient drivers in 1956 by Ernst Leverkus. But Germany's prolific sense of badassery has allowed it to grow into what it is today, moving from "various frozen

venues" to a grouping of more than 5,000 souls under the direction of *Bundesverband der Motorradfahrer* or German Federal Association of Motorcycle Riders (BVDM).

In an environment where temperatures can sink to as low as -15 C over a sea of six-month-snow-ridden land, these "filth monkeys" have to be one hardened bunch of crazy mofos. And they are. And it's for this reason that Alessandro's venture can be more effectively perceived as a leap or plummet. Not only was the winter 2013-14





Alessandro's first time at Elefantentreffen, but his first excursion into the world of motorcycles as a whole. In fact, his last project was about horse racing. Being a nonrider, he attended that first rally and continues to do so as a photographer whose role is to capture the essence of the event, trying to understand and absorb this world to the fullest, but from a perspective that conveys the sense that it "doesn't belong to me."

When leaving for his first Elefantentreffen rally from his small provincial town in central Italy, with no motorcycle at his disposal, Alessandro had to go by BlaBlaCar, a long-distance ride-sharing service, as well as by train, bus, and hitchhiking. This route, he would later find out, is actually a small facet but crucial variable of the rally that's unique to each rider. After much traveling and, most likely, much cursing at his unhelpful map, Alessandro soon made it to Thurmansbang, a small town in Germany far removed from civilization. With such an ambiguous location as the Bavarian Forest, his first order of business was asking locals where he had to go. Eventually, he was directed towards a specific section of the forest. It was -4 C.

As he trudged through the snow, he saw motorcycles loaded with everything imaginable zooming past him, leaving a momentary wall of white in their wake before immediately dispersing into the freezing air, leaving no trace that there were even machines there, save for the sound of their engines now far off in the distance. However, rather than following these riders, Alessandro took a separate path, one which he had been told by locals was a shortcut (famous last words), alone with the snow, the silence, his thoughts, and the endless large white firs around him. The only indication that he wasn't lost or going to freeze to death was the sound of rumbling bikes somewhere in the forest. But soon his solitary state was thrust into pandemonium.

"Finally in front of me lay a valley. There were motorcycles parked everywhere, people laden with firewood and tents that went in all directions, hundreds of campfires and a great euphoria that saturated the air." In this abandoned, frozen wasteland, Alessandro was soon greeted by a phrase written on the back of a leather jacket, which read "The bad thing of summer is that the motorcyclist mingles with who has the bike."

It was in this place known as "the hole" where he first met this rowdy bunch of hard asses. One such character whom Alessandro will never forget is a French pensioner named Antoine who was, at the time, returning from North Cape. Antoine's survival bike was a three-wheeled motorcycle handcrafted with Moto Citroën. Attached to this trike was a wagon and on that wagon was a bed, Antoine's lodging for the three-day event. Other standout bikes were owned by a couple of friends who had come to the rally together. They were just as interesting as their bikes, clothed in military uniforms to complement their steeds: black Zündapps that read "property of the Wehrmacht in 1940" on their tanks. In operation from 1935 to '46, the *Wehrmacht*, which translates to defense force, was

Germany's unified armed forces consisting of members of the *Heer* (army), the *Kriegsmarine* (navy), and the *Luftwaffe* (air force).

While garbing oneself in military dress to match one's bike's original use may seem like a really cool way of getting more involved in the festivities, this is nothing when compared to those who come flourishing garments that make them look like, as Alessandro originally described them, "woolly mammoths" and "the anarcho-Goth meets Grizzly Adams."

My naiveté about the culture was apparent in my questions, for, after asking "Why do they dress up like that?" his reply was a simple one, "Total freedom."

It's a way to further embellish what those days in the woods are all about: beyond the everyday life. "There are bikers who come dressed in technical jackets and there are also riders who prefer to wear fur," clarifies Alessandro. "There are young guys who have shoes covered with duct tape and organized groups that have equipment from the Russian

army." It's as he says: the style doesn't matter, nor does the money. It's all about enhancing this outlandish experience.

It was during his time mingling with the indigenous folk of this moto-inspired ecosystem that Alessandro realized that the riding portion of the event was already over; if he were a rider taking part in the rally, the journey he traveled to get there would have been meant to be traveled by motorcycle. Every biker you see in the hole has traveled from all over Europe from their homes to attend Elefantentreffen before descending into valley where they will spend the next three days. "Each traveler will have his own different journey behind him," Alessandro says. Those who come from Italy must cross the Alps, motorcyclists in the Czech Republic journey through forests, and the Dutch's path takes them on many highways where they must deal with the frigid temperatures, exacerbated by highway speeds. The closer you get to the rally, the more difficult the roads become, "roads full of curves and snow, which are closed to cars for many kilometers." The most important thing about the rally is that you have arrived.

Seeing as riding in the snow is normal, especially for the Germans, Poles, Austrians, and Czechs, the nights in the hole are lively. Where most of us, me included, would probably be huddled in a tent, under a plethora of sheets, and clothed in an exorbitant amount of layers that would make me look as though I'm 100 pounds more than I really am, listening to my iPod (seeing as there is no music and no bands at Elefantentreffen), rocking back and forth in the fetal position, these guys sit around the



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Yamaha
Suzuki
Kawasaki
Victory
Triumph

fire, singing drunken songs while drinking beer or strange concoctions brewed in cauldrons bubbling over fires, and, oftentimes, roasting a pig on a spit. And if you want to go from tent to tent, you swing your legs over your machine, skidding over the ice, your wheels getting entrenched in the snow as you try not to fall.

As Alessandro explained, to carry the necessary equipment to the hole like wood, beer, and tents, many people build snowmobiles out of anything they can find, which can include, but are not limited to, a motor cultivator with a ski, a sled dragged by a couple of motorcycles, and stoves with wheels made from small concrete mixers. As you might imagine, these homemade, rudimentary designs can end up bursting asunder. Speaking of which, as Alessandro related, the fireworks from the last edition were banned because rockets that are fired off during the Elephant Rally have the uncanny knack of always landing on tents and burning them to the ground. Now, to make up for the lack of fireworks, the silence of the mountains is disturbed by more forceful revving from the various engines in the hole, filling the silence of the wilderness with their own chorus.

With Americans being as we are, a competitive lot, the next tid-bit might tempt you to take the plunge into the hole. At the end of the rally, there's a prize for the rider who has traveled the farthest to get there. "An American would win *sicuramente* and would be the star of the event," says Alessandro, *sicuramente* meaning "assuredly" or "of course" in Italian. Next year also marks the event's 60th anniversary. Seeing as this rally is such a huge part of Europe's heritage, "It would be nice to see that motorcycle culture meet American culture," as Alessandro says.

Isn't that what motorcycling is all about? The escape from everyday life ... **M**

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Art, In And Of Itself

BLENDING TONES OF THE CHOPPER AND CANVAS

A

lmost since the first motor was installed in a chassis to mechanically power the forward momentum of two wheels, riders have been modifying every aspect of that two-wheeled machine to take on any given terrain or style of riding. And then there are those who customize their steeds to acclimate to something less tangible, a rebellion from the norm. One such endeavor that has proliferated into one of the most popular and revered cultures in the moto realm is the chopper; the pursuit of spartan riding conditions, insane rake, and, most importantly, the chopping of unnecessary components: lights, signals, and brakes, while leaving behind minimalist components like a jockey shifter.

Basically, motorcycles have and will continue to follow this inexorable trend of being modified, customized, and fabricated by their owners so that they can venture deeper into the unknown. Such is the case with 2 Wheels + Motor. Curated by Ric Stewart, 2 Wheels features paintings, sketches, drawings, sculptures, fabrics, and the like of motorcycles and the culture they have inspired. Originally conceptualized for and incorporated into the AMA Hall of Fame Museum in Pickerington, Ohio (May/June 2014), this fusion between the fine arts and the two-wheeled machine is now at the National Motorcycle Museum (NMM) in Anamosa, Iowa.

While you may not realize it, this concept of showcasing a full-blown fine arts motorcycle exhibit is fairly new. At least, it's not common for motorcycle museums to dedicate a good amount of space just to the arts.



2 Wheels + Motor fills the walls and a considerable amount of floor space behind the Chopper Story exhibit. Photo by Pam Proctor.



A Ron Finch creation, Copper Kettle languished in the dark corner of a garage for years, but was recently refurbished. However, it still wears its original paint and has many solid copper components with true patina.

Why? There are those who believe that the motorcycle should be celebrated as it is: a machine. Focusing on anything that goes beyond what this machine is built for, the riding and mechanical portions, shouldn't be taken seriously or celebrated. This is especially the case with the latter, when key components are used or altered in a way that are not only unconventional and don't directly translate to any facet of its culture, but when they "lose" their primary design and function. But rather than eviscerating motorcycle culture as we know it, 2 Wheels + Motor has received nothing but praise, and can be viewed as having even breathed new life into our culture.



While 2 Wheels + Motor at the NMM has kept its name, Ric doesn't want this rendition to be a carbon copy of the first. And it isn't. Probably the most prominent change is that 2 Wheels coincides with a chopper exhibit called Allstate Motorcycle Chopper Story presented by J&P Cycles, both of which debuted during the NMM's Vintage Rally on June 20 (see sidebar).

What Ric does want for 2 Wheels, however, is to make it well balanced. It's a juggling effect between the avant-garde and the truly representational pieces of art. "I'm a firm believer that every time I curate a show, I put stuff in that I really like, and I'll argue tooth and nail for something," he says. "When I do a show, I want to represent what's out there in the art world." One reason for this is because Ric wants 2 Wheels to act as a conduit for motorcyclists to venture into the art realm, introducing riders to a new way of expressing and feeling about their passion.

On the subject of blending the two exhibits together, Mark Mederski, the museum's special projects director, describes 2 Wheels + Motor and Chopper Story as a synchronicity, saying, "They're both artistic expressions, if you will. People who built choppers worked outside the box, and so did the painters, the sculptors, and photographers that are contributing art to the show."

Mark, who I found out studied industrial design in art school, compared the relationship of motorcycling and art to motorcyclists having their own interests, like motocrossers or "relentless Harley guys making the annual pilgrimage out to Sturgis" and later referred to a relationship that could be between a rider and an artist through the work of a hypothetical painter whom Mark named Louis. After mentioning how art lets you pick whatever theme to express, he continues, saying, "The art adds an incredibly diverse set of feelings that people have about riding, so if you're there stuck in a concrete building, you see Louis' art on the wall and it takes you where Louis wants you to go, how he wants you to feel, and it's mind-expanding."

In what I view as a way of

steadily ameliorating the negativity surrounding motorcycle art, while hosting 2 Wheels + Motor will be the first time that the NMM has done an exhibit purely from a fine arts perspective, Mark reveals that the museum already has its feet wet when it comes to displaying graphic arts, having about 10-15 years of experience in that department with graphic material, unit for unit, from David Uhl, Scott Jacobs, and Tom Fritz, among others.

Conversely, Ric also isn't an interloper in the realm of riding. Amongst his various styles and subject matters in his art work, much of Ric's motorcycle-related pieces not only revolve around the two-wheeler, but are inspired by actual experiences while astride the machine itself.

Make of it what you will.

Just to get an idea of how much effort went into this exhibit, I've spoken with Ric numerous times over the course of a few months, and each time, at least one aspect of the exhibit had changed, the progress of which was always conveyed via percentages. The latest was, before June 20, around 95 percent. (And it was still only 95 percent completed even after Ric and the museum staff underwent a rigorous 12-hour-plus day of work from 5 am to 11 pm.)

One of the many factors that contributed to this setup being time-consuming is that everyone has a say about what goes up — including Mark and National Motorcycle Museum President and J&P Cycles founder John Parham, not to mention those like Paul d'Orléans curating the Chopper Story show — so that everything flows. “Mark and I have worked together for many, many, many years,” Ric says emphatically. “And we have way different tastes.” It's for this reason, as Ric states, that their shows are always so popular because there are both ends of the spectrum pushing and pulling until they come together to make a copacetic exhibit. “Ric's a little more creative than I am, he's a little wackier, more flexible and eccentric, so to speak, than I am,” Mark adds.

Of course, these varying tastes don't just manifest in their taste for art, but bikes. “When it comes to motorcycles, John and I kind of have similar tastes, and Mark and mine



are off at a different track,” Ric says. One such instance exemplifying this difference involved a time when they had to put up dragbikes on pedestals for a show. And one pedestal was, of course, higher than the others. To make a long story short, it took Ric and Mark two weeks to set it up.

When describing the layout of the NMM and how he utilized that space to fully embellish 2 Wheels, Ric's explanation is much like how a rider customizes his bike to better suit an environment, cutting off and modifying parts and installing bits here and there. Ric first described the NMM as “sensory overload” later saying that “it's gargantuan.” To get an idea, the NMM used to be a Walmart. “It's floor-to-ceiling,” Ric continues. “It's got very high ceilings, 20' high, and the bigger paintings, they need a big wall.” And there is such a wall. And it basically acts as a giant canvas, which Ric has designated as the “art wall.” And by filling it up, Ric ended up changing how he normally sets up an exhibit, which had the potential of creating dissonance but has instead created an *éclat* demonstration. “It's kinda crammed for an art show,” he says. “But it's not crammed when compared to the rest of the museum.” Beyond the wall, these pieces cover every inch of the museum, going from being “pretty low to the floor” to hanging from the ceiling “probably 6' from the rafters.”

*Top: Knowin' What's What by Tom Fritz.
Bottom left: Triumph by Joseph Lombardo.
Bottom right: The Gunslinger by Scott Jacobs.*



About 85 works of art are included in the show. Paintings, prints, photographs, bronze sculptures, and enamel on copper works are on view.

The pieces that are hung from the ceiling are Michael “Sideshow Mike” Siculan’s sideshow banners. Two of these banners were made just for this exhibit. The first, *Monkeys On Wheels*, shows, well, monkeys on wheels. “It’s the most traditional,” Sideshow Mike remarks. “I kept the colors as original as possible, and it has been slightly weathered to really have that vintage flavor.” The second banner, hanging right above it, features a similar layout, with the title, *Hell Driver*, almost quite literally emblazoned at the top with motorcycles either being spit out of or exploded from the mouth of two devil-like heads, something I believe Evel Knievel could have done ... or probably even did. About *Hell Driver*, Sideshow Mike says “This one is my version of the famous motordrome shows from the carnival, which I spiced up with some crystal and glitter.”

The banners themselves are not only painted, but are, for the most part, acrylic and feature cut-out enameled copper and an integrated wiring system that connects to the banners with lights so that the headlights and tail-lights in the paintings actually work. “Half of the banner stands out when you shine a black light on it,” Ric adds. That’s because Sideshow Mike also used UV paint.

These banners, in essence, shift between the dimensional rift in the art show, between the two dimensional (the art wall) and the three dimensional. This relationship is enhanced by what the folks at the NMM call the Motorcycle Shop, the contents of which change with every exhibit, and has now been altered to accentuate the Chopper Story (see sidebar). Even though the shop complements the chopper culture, Ric took advantage of the Motorcycle Shop’s extra spacing on the outside by

hanging various pieces from its external walls, including Crissy Mount-Kapp’s Henderson-X, with Ric’s brother’s 2003 Harley-styled art project laid out in front of the shop.

No matter how you would like to interpret the “Harley,” from the eyes of an artist — who could see it as a byproduct of *objet trouvé* — or from the builder — as it’s endemic for most do-it-yourselfers to make use of everything and anything he may find — the bike was created out of junk. Built to promote Willie G’s 100th anniversary book, the only original parts on the bike are the early 1900s seat and the skip-link chain and sprockets. Everything else came from old bicycle tubes that Ric’s brother bent up and welded together. “The motor is wood, the carburetor is made out of potted meat cans and two rubber balls,” Ric explains.

On that same topic, and truer to *objet trouvé*, is a piece that, coincidentally, began and was sold originally as a painting before being discarded. After being found, this piece soon evolved into a new form of art that now displays motorcycles on one side that has hung in a Harley dealership for decades. Owned by



Kathy Estep, Ric describes the finished product as being “in a nasty frame. It’s covered with cigar smoke, and it even has one or two bullet holes in it.” The original painting (before becoming what it is now with moto art) was done in the late-1950s-early-’60s in a style that Ric calls as being “worse than black velvet art.” I attribute it to really cheap Walmart paintings, and Ric predicts it was probably bought for \$3. Well, a rider named Teddy Troupp found this \$3 painting in the early 1960s in a dumpster, a man Ric said would paint on anything. And guess what? He does paint on anything. Teddy painted on the cardboard side (the back end). And now, in addition to featuring “velvet art” on one side, the piece is now a painting of Kathy’s brother, Ronnie Rall, a motorcycle racer, on the cardboard end.

Another area of interest in the museum: a short wall that juts outward. This wall is about 4’ high and holds various bronzes, including one from Daniel Wright, a local artist (he went to Sabula High School in the 1970s with his wife) whom Mark was able to snag for the exhibit. Daniel’s claim to fame is sculpting the trophies for Bonneville, including Fast Bike (which is showcased in 2 Wheels). Mark clarifies that this trophy is awarded annually by the Utah Salt Flats Racing Association “for the motorcycle competitor who posts the fastest one-way speed at the annual World of Speed each September.” This honor is generally called Fast Bike of the Meet, and this Fast Bike sculpture was inspired by an Irish newspaper illustration of Joseph setting the Ultimate Motorcycle Speed Record on a highway outside of Cork, Ireland, in 1930. Daniel’s other piece on show is the eponymous sculpture of Burt Munro, who should require no intro-

duction; Burt is portrayed by actor Anthony Hopkins in the 2005 film *The World’s Fastest Indian*.

There’s also a giant skull piece in that spot. Created by Tim Rietenbach, the skull is actually an example of pointillism, which is a technique that consists of dots applied in a pattern that forms one image.

But probably the more eye-catching display right below the skull is what appears to be a couch. Upon closer inspection, you’ll notice that it’s a couch in the shape of what looks like the back end of a Corvette. It’s made by Mike Corbin who Ric made sure to mention is “pretty famous for his motorcycle seats.” (And, amazingly, I was told that no one during the debut sat on it.) And if four wheels in a motorcycle exhibit is too much, right next to the couch, probably to compensate, is a 1948 Indian-themed chair. Both the couch and chair were taken from Jill Parham’s office at the museum.

Speaking of furniture, Ric, after some trial and tribulation, was able to acquire something that could be considered furniture but didn’t begin as such; it started out as a painting. Created by Andrew Lundberg, the painting is of an old Yale motorcycle seat. Ric loved the original painting so much that he pursued Andrew relentlessly for it. After asking Andrew again and again for the piece, Ric decided to take matters into his own hands and visit the artist himself. What Ric found was definitely not what he was expecting. “Andrew’s regular chair had broken. He took this painting of the Yale and screwed it onto what was left of that chair, and he was sitting on it, working on a sculpture. So it was a painting of a Yale saddle that was now a chair to sit on. I actually like it better as a chair,” he adds.

For those moved by *Motorcycle*’s in-depth article about the Wall of Death (March/April 2014), can now experience the motordrome vicariously through different mediums at the NMM. Photographer Ralph Corriveau, painter Alicia Jean Vanderelli, and Andrew “work with that gang all the time,” and their Wall of Death works are featured in 2 Wheels. The more realistic of them is Ralph’s photograph of Wally riding the wall. Meanwhile, Alicia composed her reactions from the Motor Drome



Top left: Flames by Dave Perewitz. Above: Pipeline by J.B. Norris.

THE CHOPPER STORY

The Allstate Motorcycle Chopper Story presented by J&P Cycles opened with the accompanying 2 Wheels + Motor art exhibit during the NMM's Vintage Rally on June 20. Despite the rain and a falling tent, it was a success, with local customizers stopping by and holding seminars of

sorts with a special focus on pinstriping, which the pinstriping community refers to as a "panel jam." During panel jams, the audience gets to watch the customizers in action, working at tables with a piece of sheet metal or other material.

For the Chopper Story, Mark hired Paul d'Orléans as guest curator, seeing as Paul's new book *The Chopper, the Real Story* was just about to go to press. With Paul's help, the staff was able to acquire period-correct 20-plus choppers constructed in 1960s-early-'80s. Guys like Arlen Ness, Indian Larry, Ron Finch, Dave Bell, Barry Duncan, Tommy Summers, and others from across America are represented.

But rather than showing just the bikes (if you can say "just" in the same sentence with sexy, long-legged choppers), Chopper Story will tell a story (gaspl!). "Instead of just having a bike displayed there with a label, we dug out what it means so people have something to take away," Mark says.

Those who prefer period-correct machines and take what the originating term *chopper* signifies in its purest form should be more than satisfied. "We don't just roll the bikes into the room," relates Mark. "It's a pretty choreographed process, takes some planning, and you can't really go in and screw with it too much."

In addition to the bikes, there's a wooden structure inside the NMM in the far corner of the allocated space. Called the Motorcycle Shop, Mark describes it as a replica of a "late-19th-century structure with a huge front door, high-pitched roof, and lapped siding." The really cool thing about the Motorcycle Shop is that it's always directly correlated to the current exhibit in rotation, making it an extra component of that showing. For Chopper Story, the Motorcycle Shop is, as Mark explains it, like a time capsule, flourishing various items relating to chopper culture with frames, wheels, forks, sissybars, tanks, paint samples, and the like.

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through a painting, which she created on site between shows while inside the wall.

Another artist who must be mentioned is the late painter/sculptor/racer David DeLong. Trained in the classics, David's work covers a variety of styles and mediums applied through an impasto of colors and styles: watercolors, etchings, paintings, and sculptures, among others. While David employed a vast amount of artistic techniques, his work generally revolved around one of his deepest passions: racing.

Taking this conventional mindset to another level, 2 Wheels is also showcasing enameled pieces by Koranna Spurgeon that are done in the style of cave wall paintings, a portrayal of which she accomplishes by first beating up a piece of copper. These "cave paintings" are so popular that Koranna has made various versions with a slightly altered theme because they keep being sold. One of her pieces (which was purchased before the debut but was still incorporated in the show) is named *Herd* and shows a Harley riding amongst a herd of horses, playing on the alternative use of *steed*. Another, *Hunters of the Wild Hog*, was also made and named after a play on words, specifically on the various significations of *hog*, which can also be used as a way to denote a Harley. *Hunters* is an enameling of cavemen with spears chasing a Harley-Davidson instead of an animal.

But probably one of the more crucial parts of the show, from my point of view, is how the two aspects, the fine arts and the motorcycles, are shown as a harmonious accumulation of one concept in one area, rather than being completely separated in different parts of the museum. The dynamic relationship between 2 Wheels and Chopper Story is shown through a steady oscillation from one to the other. On one end, you have most of

the choppers, and on the other is the art with that aforementioned big art wall connecting the two. Interestingly, the art wall shows this change most effectively since the paintings are all gathered in close proximity to one another, acting as the chief visual representation of how the exhibits, while not in name, are the same through the innate similarities between the chopper, a work of art in and of itself, and the fine arts. "As it goes down closer to the chopper end of the gallery, in and behind it, the wall is more old-school-related chopper pieces," Ric explains. But where does this wall lead us to?

One portion of the exhibit, which Ric referred to as the "Von Dutch area" during our talk, is one of the many milestones that contributes to the exhibit's almost inherent pull toward that "final destination," one that further illustrates how both exhibits actually momentarily become one.

Von Dutch is known for his far-out-in-the-ether creations. In addition to these avant-garde pieces on display — including a motorcycle helmet that's not only engraved with the designation and logos of various motorcycle manufacturers created in the style of a World War I German war helmet, but was flung further into the nonrepresentational abyss by being made with a baby bottle nipple rather than sporting a spoke at the helmet's apex like most German helmets from that time were crafted — is something fully anchored in reality, a Triumph 500. This highly intriguing juxtaposition is further instated by Ric's closing comment about the bike: the bike is actually part of the art show, not the Chopper Story exhibit. To bring the divagation of art and the motorcycle even closer together, sitting behind the Triumph is a sculpture of a dragon, a "wacked-out piece," which, as Ric told me, Von Dutch built for his nephew. "And I'm sure he's still having nightmares of it."

Accentuating this catalyzing effect of bike and art is a trike that's included in 2 Wheels + Motor called *Trilogy* by Ron Finch. But before describing *Trilogy*, I should explain what else Ron has contributed to 2 Wheels, a Von Dutch tribute piece (that should be ample information of how crazy it

is) of a flying eyeball located in the exhibit's Von Dutch area. While not conventionally motorcycle related, the eyeball and Ron's 2'-plus-long fish are made out of various motorcycle components, like spark plugs and motorcycle sprockets, among others. And there's his great, big, giant fly made out of crescent wrenches at the museum, too.

Back to Trilogy. Trilogy is a trike that really takes the concept of "tri" to the next level: "It's a three-wheel machine powered by a Trident Triple engine, and it's got three headlights," begins Ric. "It's all done in threes." (Again mirroring this heavily themed bike, there's another one of Ron's choppers in the Chopper Story exhibit, an original-paint bike all done in bronze and browns.)

And now the "destination:" Ed "Big Daddy" Roth, which includes his refrigerator door that features his well-known Rat Fink plastered on the front (and there is a Big Daddy trike in the chopper exhibit, too). Big Daddy is so pivotal because his influence on Ric can be traced way back to when Ric was a kid, the bedrock of that inspiration being how Big Daddy painted on clothes. "Big Daddy fit my mind when I was very young," Ric begins. "I thought, 'Well, why wouldn't you paint your clothes?' My mother didn't think that was too neat, but I painted on my tennis shoes and my jackets my whole life." As such, painted leather jackets join the art's chorus of motorcycle discourse (for a history of the motorcycle leather jacket, see the Jan/Feb 2014 issue).

Again, due to the ever-fluctuating contingency of a curator's craft, a final, last-minute change has indirectly brought the two separate exhibits even closer together. The jackets are now draped on certain choppers rather than being displayed in their own area. Ric draped one of his jackets on a bike he has seen guys try to ride numerous times before crashing it. "When we were moving it into the National, I found out why," reveals Ric. "If you're not careful and you turn the bike to the left, it will smash your hand into the gas tank. It was built for show, not go." Ric chose that particular chopper because its original paint looks like it has "a big ol' life." So Ric picked one of his jackets that has the same pati-



na and tie-wired it onto the chopper's headlight.

In closing, I would like to impart one final image, one that, much like the famous adage, "A picture is worth a thousand words," offers many interpretations. It's also almost, in a way, the newest accessory of the museum's entire offering, conveying a sense of how motorcycling brings us all together. Ric describes this "addition," a photograph taken by Mark, with a front wheel from the exhibit in the foreground "and then behind the front wheel is Indian Larry's Chain of Mystery bike, and then behind the chain bike, you can see the art wall, and there's a very large picture of Indian Larry in the background. They're not even in the same parts of the gallery," he adds. "It looks like Larry could ride that bike and stand up on it like he used to do, and then there he is." And if you notice, the Chain Of Mystery bike is on the highest pedestal. "This year, Mark and I didn't argue about what to put on top."

Make of it what you will. **M**

Featured for the opening of Chopper Story was the Indian Larry creation Chain of Mystery.

The Rain In Spain

STAYS MAINLY EVERYWHERE





The whitewashed villages of Andalusia sprinted across my field of vision as my BMW zoomed across another perfect arc in a road that undulated over velvety green hinterlands. Behind them lie layer cakes of snowcapped mountains and an ice-blue sky, accentuated with brushstroke clouds. The conditions for riding were categorically perfect, bolstered by a tailwind that pushed me down towards the world-famous Costa del Sol, where a well-earned beer awaited me at the end of what had been a stupendously scenic adventure through the south of Spain.

Yet it hadn't exactly been smooth-sailing. Along with complex navigational problems like road closures and a cantankerous GPS, I'd had to contend with gale-force winds, landslides, snow, blizzards, and torrential rain that soaked 95 percent of Andalusia during the day I flew in from Australia and continued without respite until the second last day of my ride.

Here's how I made the best of it ...

Sashaying through the alleyways in one of Andalusia's many whitewashed villages.



Day One: Málaga to Carboneras

In most places, riding along motorways is the stuff yawns are made of. But in the motorcycling nirvana that is Andalusia, they provide high-octane thrills. Spanning eight lanes, the Autovía del Mediterráneo is an engineering marvel with colossal steel viaducts, bridging valleys, and tunnels blasted into mountainsides up to 2km (1-1/4 miles) in length. I galloped along gleefully like a wild animal uncaged after having spent the past two days staring at a thickly overcast sky from the Puente Romano Beach Resort in Marbella, a seaside playground for the wealthy on the Costa del Sol.

With a king-size bed, full-size living room, and wall-to-wall marble floors, my hotel suite at Puente Romano was as good a place as any to wait out a storm. But instead of abating, the rain gathered momentum as the days went by.

When I could take no more of it, I caught a bus 50km (31 miles) east to Málaga, the largest city on the coast. There I rendezvoused with Johannes Suppan, owner of Hispania Tours, a BMW Motorrad tour company that offers a week-long Especial Andalusia self-guided tour.

The Especial tour would be a wash out, Johannes told me. But if I were up for an

adventure, we could plan a customized route. Updated daily using real-time mapping and meteorological technology, it would — fingers crossed — allow me to see the best of Andalusia and avoid the worst of the rain. And so it was that I found myself galloping along the Autovía del Mediterráneo towards Cabo de Gata Natural Park in the southeast corner of Spain, one of the only places in Europe with a true desert climate that sees very little rain.

Cabo is a wild and isolated place, characterized by sharp peaks and crags that descend to ochre-colored coastal cliffs. The route Johannes programmed into the Garmin GPS cut a lonely path through vast, empty salt flats and around volcanic domes and little coves. Just before nightfall, it deposited me in Carboneras, a laidback resort town on the coast.

After checking into my hotel, I found a bustling tapas bar. *Tapas*, for those who've never had the pleasure, are snack-size servings of various foods, such as chorizo sausage, octopus, calamari, marinated olives, Iberian ham, and the like. Consumed with gregarious amounts of wine, the Spaniards consider tapas their national sport. I tried a number of different plates and wines while striking up a conversation with a local named José. "The northern Europeans, they all come here to bask in the warm climate of our





Left: The author taking a breather on a high pass in the Chaparral Mountains

Above: A short and brief straight on the switchback-laden road on the approach to Ronda.

soil," he said. "We may not have a lot of money in Spain, but we have good food, great wine, and we really know how to live."

Day Two: Carboneras to Bacares

José wasn't joking, and to prove a point, he dragged me from bar to bar and then to a house party, and I only got back to my hotel at 3 am. So I had a slight hangover the next morning when my smart phone alerted me to an e-mail from Johannes that contained the day's route: a six-hour run into the Sierra de Los Filabres, the 7,113'-high range northwest of Carboneras. Johannes wrote that the weather in the mountains was clear for the time being, but heavy rain was expected to return in the early evening, so I'd better make tracks.

Everything was going according to plan until I discovered that one of the key roads on Johannes' route was closed due to a landslide. I spent the next two or three hours riding around in circles until I found an alternative entry point into the Filabres.

But it ain't no highway. A vintage asphalt road eroded over decades, the route shrinks into a goat track that winds its way through thickly forested mountains that become larger and more beautiful with every pass. With nothing but olive groves, abandoned hamlets, and pine forests in sight, I felt as though I'd been transported back centuries in time. "In Italy or Germany or Austria, where I'm from, you can find beautiful mountains like the Filabres," Johannes told me later on. "But there will be another hundred bikers there and a car park and hotel and restaurant. Everything in those countries has been discovered. Andalusia is one of the last places in Europe where you can still find total isolation, where a rider can really feel alone."

I spent the night in Bacares, a 500-year-old village set almost 4,000' above sea level with one hotel, one pub, and one tourist — me. That evening, the pub was packed to the gills, as every man and his goat had turned up to watch a football match between Barcelona and Real Madrid. I shared some tapas and wine with the locals but, recalling that morning's hangover, decided to call it an early night.

Day Three: Bacares to Granada

The next morning, I hit a major snag. Overnight flash flooding had knocked out the Bacares' communication tower, and I couldn't get online to check Johannes' updates or even give him a call. Separated from the information superhighway, I was forced to rely on my own devices. I gave up the idea of heading north where it was bound to be colder and opted instead to head 140km (87 miles) west as the crow flies to the inland city of Granada. But in the dramatic and ever-changing landscape of Andalusia, riding in a straight line is wishful — and boring — thinking.

My route took me south from Bacares down a switchback-laden road where I came across something I'd never seen while riding ... snow! I posed for a selfie to show the folks back home. I couldn't help but feel disappointed when the snow disappeared as the road scaled down the Filabres towards the Tabernas Desert in the valley below.

With cacti, tumbleweeds, and blood-red sunsets, Tabernas looks like Arizona and is home to Little Hollywood, a 1960s movie set where Spaghetti Westerns like *A Fistful of Dollars* and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* were shot. Faux Wild West towns that were built half a century ago now operate as theme parks with cowboy-stunt shows and mock bank raids. But I had no time for such distractions and continued west along the southern flank of the Sierra Nevada, which, at 2.16 miles above sea level, is the tallest range in all of Spain. And there's only one way through it: Puerto de La Ragua, a 1-1/2-mile pass where one can see all the way to Africa on a clear day.

But the Sierra Nevada was covered in thick fog that day. By the



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Hit by a minor blizzard while crossing the Sierra Mountains.

time I reached the midway point, visibility was reduced to about 70'. The temperature dropped like a bomb, with the thermometer on my BMW registering a chilly 0 C (32 F). I pulled over and did whatever I could to rug up, putting on a second pair of thermals, glove inners, and a ski mask.

As I continued to climb, the narrow mountain path's visibility dropped to 30', then to 15', and then to about 10'. Then it started snowing, and within moments, I found myself riding through a blizzard that made a joke out of the piddly patches of melting snow I'd seen earlier that day. I progressed at a snail's pace, beeping my horn repeatedly in case a car came the other way while wondering how much higher I could climb until the Beemer's

fuel lines froze. Just when I couldn't take any more of the cold, I felt a sudden change in temperature and crossed the pass. The snow and fog all but disappeared, and I was treated to a panoramic view of the sprawling green Andalusian countryside below.

Day Four: Granada to La Herradura

With cobblestone alleyways and plazas, medieval cathedrals, and a thriving arts and nightlife scene, Granada is one of the most beautiful cities in Spain. But I was far more interested in motorcycling through mountains than sipping cappuccinos with yuppies wearing bow ties and horn-rimmed glasses, so I wasted no time getting out of Dodge.

Johannes was back online and thrilled to hear about how much I'd enjoyed crossing the Sierra Nevada. The current day's route, he told me, was going to take me through another high-altitude pass across the Sierra del Chaparral mountains, south of Granada. It would then spit me out on the coast, where he'd booked a motel room at La Herradura, a former fishing village turned tourist trap on the Mediterranean coast.

Over the course of the next two hours, I took in long, empty straights, curvaceous back roads, and a boulder-strewn chicane that took me to the shallow end of the 3,900'-high pass. The view on the business end of the pass is absolutely ridiculous: gigantic limestone cliff formations, sheer gorges, and stony scree slopes that tumble into the foothills and river-slued valleys far below, backdropped, as always, with snow-capped crags and peaks. I parked my bike by a rampart and was sitting there, taking in the view, when a fat splotch of rain landed on my sunnies. It was followed by another, and another, and within moments, it was raining Noah style.

With nowhere to seek shelter from the wet, I was left with no option but to jump back on my bike and descend along the seemingly endless series of switchbacks that lead to the coast. Coupled with the odd landslip and sprinkles of gravel on the road, the rain turned what would otherwise be a mind-blowing ride into a dance with the devil that left no margin for error. If I stacked it and slid around one of these switchbacks, I could've fallen almost 3,300' to my death.

When I finally reached La Herradura, the rain had stopped, but the wind was blowing a gale. It was too cold and windy to enjoy a stroll along the beach, let alone take a dip in the Mediterranean like I'd planned. So I grabbed a few pastries, a bar of chocolate, and a carafe of wine from the supermarket and settled into my motel for a night of Spanish TV.

Day Five: La Herradura to Ronda

The strong wind I encountered at La Herradura the night before blew with

The impressive architecture of Granada.



even more ferocity the next morning. It threw my Beemer around like a kite as I headed west along the Autovía del Mediterráneo and then north at a junction that leads to Parque Natural Montes de Málaga.

Like something out of the Swiss Alps, but even greener and cleaner, the park covers 5,000 hectares (12,350 acres) of semimountainous terrain and subtropical valleys, brimming with wild boars, badgers, foxes, eagles, and buzzards. It's also home to Andalusia's most iconic geological feature, a city-size megalithic limestone formation called El Torcal de Antequera.

But getting up to the base of El Torcal was no walk in the park, with the wind making my journey more difficult and dangerous than anything else Mother Nature had thrown at me in the past week. When I finally reached the top, it was blowing such a strong gale that I didn't dare dismount, lest the BMW get knocked off its stand. So I kept on riding around the back of the rock, on a road that cuts through rolling green hills, pockmarked with

wildflowers that led me to another iconic rock formation called *El Chorro*, The Spirit.

A giant, flooded gorge, El Chorro has a train line running right through the middle of it, courtesy of a set of tunnels and impossibly high bridges. El Chorro is also home to the King's Little Pathway (the Caminito del Rey), a narrow concrete path supported by steel stanchions that professional climbers rank among the most dangerous footpaths on the planet. Five people died trying to climb it in 1999, and it only recently reopened following a multimillion euro facelift.

From El Chorro, I continued west to Ronda, one of the oldest white villages in Andalusia. Perched on an inland plateau and interconnected by three ancient stone bridges spanning a flooded canyon, Ronda is like something out of a fairytale picture book. I could've happily spent the next day exploring the place, but there was no way that I would sacrifice even a minute of my last day on these stupendous roads. **M**

Hispania Tours offers self-guided eight-night tours of Andalusia with six riding days and four-star accommodations for €790 (\$889.78) per person. Add €250 (\$281.56) for a single-room supplement, €450 (\$506.81) for a pillion, €20 (\$22.52) a day for optional premium insurance, and €10 (\$11.26) a day if you need to rent Stadler jackets and pants, a Shoei helmet, and Daytona boots. Finally, add another €570 (\$641.99) for a BMW F 700 GS, €630 (\$709.46) for a F 800 GS, or €870 (\$979.72) for a 1200 RT. Fuel and dinner aren't included. Visit Hispania-Tours.com for more information.

SOURCES

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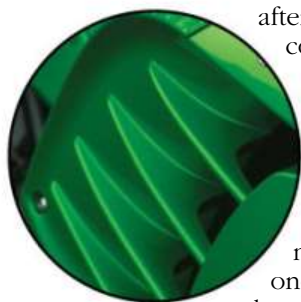
lmost 30 years ago, someone at Kawasaki thought “You know ... I like riding the sporty Ninja 900, but I can’t carry any gear, my back hurts on long rides, and my passenger won’t last the entire trip.” And, presto! The Concours

1000 was born. Okay, maybe it didn’t really happen that way, but for whatever reason, when Kawasaki built the upright riding-position, reliable-as-a-hammer, sport-riding-capable touring bike, it stumbled on a magic formula. And ever since then, the Concours has gone through

several updates, proving Team Green doesn’t actually “stumble” on anything at all. And, with the Concours 14, Kawasaki has refined it to a point where there’s barely anything to improve from here on out. Proof of this can be seen by the way I acted surprised when I was told of the latest improvements, like a lower first-gear ratio for easier starts from a stop and revised ABS settings to reduce the linked brake effect, which some consumers commented about. Beats me! I thought last year’s Concours was fine.

The early version of the Concours 1000 was known for needing front suspension mods right out of the box. But it wasn’t long before forum board members and the aftermarket parts companies had a recipe in place for cooking up a decent handling machine. With the introduction of the revamped and more expensive 2008 Concours, you got more for what you paid and accessory add-ons were more wants than needs. Same could be said for the updates to the 2015 Concours. The short shopping list of changes reads, to me, more like minor tweaks than major makeovers. But I’m not one to turn down a ride on one of my favorite sport-tourers, so here’s a recap on the upgraded 2015 Concours 14 ABS.

Motivation still comes from the Ninja ZX-14-derived in line four 1352cc engine. An engine so powerful and quiet that it allows police officers riding the police-kitted Concours to sneak up on bad drivers virtually unnoticed, except for all those flashing lights, of course. The four-cylinder engine employs Variable Valve Timing (VVT) for economy and smooth behavior and offers up so much





torque that highway downshifts for passing are rarely required. Additionally, it's nice that riders can utilize the Fuel Economy Assistance Mode to increase fuel economy, a prerequisite for riding such a powerful bike that's expected to travel great distances. The mode works in any gear, when the engine is below 6000 rpm, throttle opening is under 30 percent, and the road speed is less than 80 mph. It works two ways: first is the engine mapping and second is a dash indicator which lets you know when you're naturally getting good fuel economy. There are no major changes to the powerplant except for revised catalyzers and O₂ sensors for even cleaner emissions, as well as ECU updates to suit the aforemen-

tioned trans ratio changes and cats. Specifically, the former 3.333 first-gear ratio was changed to a "lower" 3.538, a mere .205 change in first-gear is all it takes to make the Concours more docile from a standing stop and while riding slow, tight maneuvers.

One of the barely (if at all) noticeable changes includes a new steering stem seal, which supposedly provides lighter steering at low speeds. Some other hardware changes to the 2015 include stiffer rear suspension settings for improved handling when in the twisties and increased carrying





ability. The stiffer initial preload setting shines through when carrying a passenger and full luggage. And adjustments couldn't be easier, thanks to the hand-operated remote preload adjuster, no tools required. The same front suspension is utilized as before with 43mm inverted front forks and radial-mounted brakes. However, the ABS settings have been recurved to reduce the linked braking effect formerly commented on by owners of the Concours 14. By reducing the linked effect on the front brake when the rear brake is applied, the braking feels more natural during low-speed maneuvers such as a U-turn. Riders can choose from two ABS modes for preference: Standard Mode has reduced initial brake lever stroke and High Combined Mode offers a more pronounced linking effect, making it better for touring and two-up highway use. Switching back and forth, I was able to notice the difference between the two and left mine in Standard most of the time.

Again, not major system overhauls, but fine-tuning tweaks brought about by owner feedback. A new front brake master cylinder carries a cool translucent reservoir for easy fluid-maintenance checks. Brake discs are 310mm petal-style fronts and a 270mm petal-style rear rotor. Kawasaki Traction Control (KTRC) is standard with no changes, and final drive is a virtually maintenance-free shaft drive.

The remainder of changes pertain more to comfort and convenience than anything else. The new sculpted seat is narrower at the front and

2015 KAWASAKI CONCOURS 14 ABS	
LIST PRICE	\$15,499
ENGINE	Liquid-cooled in line four
VALVETRAIN	DOHC, four valves per cylinder with VVT
DISPLACEMENT	1352cc
BORE X STROKE	84mm x 61mm
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.7:1
FUEL SYSTEM	Digital EFI, four 40mm throttle bodies
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed
FINAL DRIVE	Tetra-lever shaft
FRONT SUSPENSION	43mm, inverted, preload and rebound adjustable with 4.4" of travel
REAR SUSPENSION	Single shock, rebound adjustable, remote preload adjuster
FRONT TIRE	Bridgestone Battlax BT021 120/70ZR-17"
REAR TIRE	Bridgestone Battlax BT021 190/50ZR-17"
FRONT BRAKES	ABS; dual 310mm petal-style floating discs, four-piston calipers
REAR BRAKE	ABS; 270mm petal-style disc, two-piston caliper
OVERALL LENGTH	87.8"
WHEELBASE	59.8"
RAKE/TRAIL	26 degrees/4.4"
SEAT HEIGHT	32.1"
FUEL CAPACITY	5.8 gallons
CURB WEIGHT	690.2 pounds
WARRANTY	12, 24, or 36 months
2015 COLORS	Candy Lime Green, Metallic Spark Black



has rounded edges to help the rider reach the ground more easily and for improved comfort. The passenger benefits from a flatter and longer pillion area. Also, new rubber-padded passenger footpegs were upgraded for passenger comfort. The improved stock seat is covered in a slip-resistant material and double-stitched. Kawasaki Genuine

Accessories offers a touring seat, which is more resistant to heat buildup when sitting in the sun. Again, never a complaint from me before, but the new design certainly is all-day-comfortable. Unfortunately, I didn't have an opportunity to ride on the accessory seat.

The windscreen on the Concours 14 has always been electrically adjustable, but now the shield is larger than before and has a central three-position hand-adjustable vent, which reduces the aerodynamic load on the rider by improving airflow and reducing buffeting. A new exhaust heat shield deflects the heat well while sitting with the bike idling. Stainless steel bezels around the instrument dials add a highlight to the cockpit, and a resin tank pad (previously sold as an accessory) is now standard equipment to ward off scratches to the fuel tank.

Always favorite features of mine, the Tire Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS) and KIPASS keyless ignition system are still standard, as are heated grips. I don't know how many times I've pointed this out to other manufacturers. In this day and age, the consumers

expect a certain level of creature comfort and features. Those systems are unchanged except for a new style TPMS sensor. Although reliable as a rock, the Concours 14 comes standard with a 36-month limited factory warranty that can be boosted with another 36 months of Kawasaki Protection Plus. Only two color choices are available: a loud Candy Lime Green reminiscent of the color on my 1999 ZRX1100 or (police officer lookalike) Metallic Spark Black.

If you've read well into this issue, you may have noticed I wasn't kind in my critique of another brand for not making sweeping changes to a particular model. But in the case of the Kawasaki Concours 14, there isn't anything in my mind that requires attention on the previous year's model. Thus, I'm astounded that something so good can be made better. In the vein of not showing favoritism, it gives me pleasure to skewer a product I find flawed and share that information with my readers. But in the case of the Concours 14, Kawasaki has sharpened an already sharp knife. **M**



Tony's Non-Sportbike Track Day

Y

ou should already be aware of the advantages of participating in a motorcycle track day to help hone your street-riding skills. You'll experience benefits, like no cars, no road debris, no speed limits, and no pedestrians to contend with. You'll also receive valuable professional feedback from coaches, and you'll be doing it all in a safe environment.

Best of all, it's fun and, depending on scheduling, a great way to spend a day out of the office.

If you're sitting there thinking, "I can't do it. I don't have a prepped race bike," you're completely wrong on both counts. Indeed, you can do it, and you don't need a full-on, purpose-built bike. With a little bit of easy preparation, you can take your everyday street mount and participate. If your argument is that you don't have the "right kind" of bike, you're wrong there, too.

The folks at Tony's Track Days (TTD), based in Longmeadow, Massachusetts, have just the thing for you, a Non-Sportbike Track Day. That's right, baggers, tourers, standards, adventure bikes ... all are welcome. Truth is, if you ride one of these nonsport-type bikes, with their nonsporty handling and ground clearance, you'll benefit from track day practice and coaching immensely. Costing about \$250, affordability

might be your only last-resort excuse for not attending. I suggest you save up and do it. I was told a long time ago that every minute spent sitting in a racecar (or on a race bike) costs money. Well, the same can be said for riding on a real, honest-to-gosh modern racetrack. Unless you're a multimillionaire and have a few hundred acres of land to build your own track, you need to ante-up a little bit to come to this party.

We participated in a recent TTD Non-Sportbike track day, and we'll share the experience with you. We won't go into individual skills learned at the event, rather an overview of how you can go, participate with your streetbike, and benefit from the event. Art Director Tricia Szulewski and I made the not-so-long trip to the newly remodeled Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park in the northeast corner of Connecticut aboard two press-fleet mules in our stable: a Kawasaki Vulcan 1700 Voyager and a new BMW S 1000 XR (just like the one Alfonse Palaima reviews on page 18). Thompson, while long known for its sportsman NASCAR circle-track events, recently underwent an expansion to include a 1.7-mile road course (part of which includes NASCAR turns three and four), paddock repaving, and new paddock garages. TTD visits Thompson several times a year, as well as other nearby road-race tracks.

I'm going to take a moment here to suggest you pre-



pare for the track day before you get to the track. Make sure you're aware of the requirements for your gear and your motorcycle well ahead of time. A few days before the event, give your bike a good inspection. Tires and brakes should be in top-notch condition. Make sure your cables and controls are lubed and adjusted properly. Make adjustments to the suspension to accommodate the upcoming spirited riding style. These are all things you don't want to be fiddling with when you get to the track. You'll be pretty busy during the track day, so get the bike prep out of the way before you get there. No need for safety-wiring fasteners, and taping up glass lights and mirrors on your bike can be quickly done at the track. Make sure you bring good gear, and a back protector is strongly recommended.

One thing you'll find when you arrive at a TTD event is a welcoming atmosphere. The staff has fun running these track days, and it shows. The employees are serious about the serious stuff, but they aren't a bunch of kill-joys. Tony is a great fun guy, and his staff includes *Motorcycle* contributor and author Ken Condon and his daughter Jeanine.

First thing, get there early. They're not going to wait around for you. At the start of the day, wheel your bike into the paddock gathering area for tech inspection and group assignment. Bring your leathers/riding gear to be checked out, too. Then, once you're checked in and checked over, head to the classroom for orientation. There are staff introductions, as well as introductions to you and your fellow participants. As pointed out, each rider with you on the track isn't just a helmet and a jacket. There's a person inside that helmet and jacket, and now you know a few of them. This is a community, and the camaraderie abounds. During the orientation, it's pointed out that if you're unsure about making a move

on track, don't do it. Don't make the pass, stay on line, and be predictable. Everyone wants to go home safe and sound.

After some paperwork and logistical info, the staff goes over the day's schedule of activities and track instruction. The mission statement for TTD is to give the average street rider the opportunity to enhance his skills in an environment free of the dangers and distractions present on public roads. Some people do this just for fun, just to do laps. For some, the goal is to learn more and to go faster. For others, it's a speed goal. And then there are those who feel that it's a skills goal. You're getting access to a well-groomed facility. There's value there, and you're getting a school.

Lead instructor Ken Condon went over some potential goals for the day. Not crashing; there's a good one. Put a grin on your face, another good one. Your bike's mirrors need to be taped up or removed, and not having mirrors means what's behind you is of no concern.

Everyone is going forward. Rest assured, you'll pick up your pace as the day progresses. Another goal is to learn to trust your bike, perhaps touch down a peg and feel what it's like. And the TTD crew conducts body-positioning seminars during the day to help you learn how to get maximum lean angle without dragging all those parts. You'll be getting comfortable with what your motorcycle can do and learning the capabilities of your brakes. As the day goes on, you'll feel more confident in your bike and tires.

Learning and practicing good technique should be in the foreground. Relax and think of the track simply as a great road. It comes down to you controlling your motorcycle. Groups are initially set up by bike style, but as the day progresses, it becomes more self- or instructor-designated. The importance of signaling your intentions is stressed. Use common sense. Don't use the bike's turn signals. Use hand signals. Finally, in the



WHAT TO PACK

- A small cooler with water and hydration drinks.
- Snacks, power bars.
- A folding chair.
- Tire-pressure gauge.
- Blue masking tape.
- A small tool kit.
- Sunblock.

first classroom session, there's a track-map orientation showing no-passing zones and some timely corner tips.

The first session on the track is follow-the-leader for about 15 minutes. So don't be caught off guard, like I was. Be geared-up and ready to go before they call your group. Use the first introduction to the track to warm up your tires and learn the line. It's essentially a tour of the track.

With three basic groups — Novice/cruiser, Intermediate/tourer, and Advanced/sport-touring (aka the fast guys) — each group goes out every 20 minutes. Between each session on track, there's more classroom time, with discussions like what "the line" is and delayed and double apexes and how to deal with them. So after you come in from your session, grab a bottle of water, head to the classroom, take in some info, then get geared up and ready to get back out

there. It's a fast-paced day. If you towed your bike, you may want to bring a jug of gas. Luckily, Thomson has on-site credit card-operated gas pumps, but not all tracks do. Before I knew it, it was time to refuel.

By not taking a track day, you could be riding around just doing the same thing over and over, and that *thing* might be a mistake. All in all, it makes for a fun day with your bike, at times pushing it to the limit (of both rider and machine) in a safe environment, and learning how to comfortably do so by gaining advanced skills. I must admit, it's addictive. And I'm already looking at my calendar to see when I can go again. **M**

SOURCES

Tony's Track Days LLC
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I'VE HEARD IT A MILLION TIMES: "I DON'T WANT to be distracted from the road." I get it. There are plenty of days that I just ride in silence, with nothing but my own thoughts to distract me. But those are the times that I usually get my best ideas. And, inevitably, my brilliant creativity is long forgotten once I get to my destination, or someplace where I can jot something down on paper. I've lost a lot of great ideas this way. But now I can make more than just mental notes.

Sena Technologies has created a way that I can record voice over video, and make mental notes, by using two of its products together — the Prism video camera and its 20S communication system. The Prism, a full-featured, high-definition video camera can be paired with the 20S wirelessly via Bluetooth 4.1 and, as it records video, it can also record audio from the 20S.

This is especially useful to a forgetful journalist like me, who needs to take notes on the fly at new bike press launches and motorcycle tours.

Each one of these products offers top-of-the-line technology.

Let's start with the 20S. A single unit offers Bluetooth 4.1 connectivity to a Bluetooth-enabled GPS, cell phone, or MP3 player. There's a FM radio built-in, and the pop-up antenna on the unit offers surprisingly good reception.

Using any of Sena's communication systems is easy due to its jog dial controller. There aren't a lot of buttons to try to find with a gloved hand, and the two that do exist are located away from each other, so there's no guessing if you're pushing the right button. Voice prompts also make the 20S user-friendly. You hear the voice tell you things like "low battery," and "phone connected." This verbal communication makes it a lot easier to figure out what's going on rather than decoding a series of beeps, like on most other systems.

The phone button is located behind the jog dial, and this is the one I press the most. Paired with my iPhone 5S, I find it easy to press this button once to activate Siri, who will then handle almost any task that I ask, whether it be to "read new messages," "call so-and-so," or "send a new message." I can even ask her for step-by-step navigation directions.



Being connected with the Prism and 20S and being able to record the whole trip was invaluable for a bucket list tour of Italy.

The 20S comes with several mounting options — you can use an adhesive mount or a bracket that attaches to the bottom lip of your helmet. The included stereo helmet speakers are good quality and reasonably thin. As with most communication systems, at top speed without a windscreen, it can be difficult to

hear, but in most other circumstances, the sound volume and quality is excellent. Volume is adjusted by rotating the jog dial.

An earbud port is included on the 20S, in case you have your own earbuds that you'd like to use.

There's also an MP3 port so you can attach a wired music player.

My 20S came with a boom microphone attached, but a wired mic was in the box, so I replaced the boom with the wired one and stuck the smaller mic to the inside of my full face helmet's chin bar. It's less intrusive, and offers just as good sound quality.

I tested the 20S's intercom features with

my riding buddy, Genevieve Schmitt (WomenRiders Now.com) on a tour of central Italy (Sept/Oct). The Sena 20S can be paired with up to nine other headsets. The 20S will pair with some other Sena communication systems, as well. Getting our 20S's paired was easy. There's no paper manual in the box, so I downloaded it from Sena's



The Prism's LCD readout gives you easy-to-understand information.





A screenshot from one of the HD video's taken from the helmet-mounted Prism. To view our video tests, go to TheMotorcycleMag.com.



A still shot taken by the Prism at its high-resolution, wide angle setting.

web site, and we followed the simple instructions. There are two ways to pair units together, one being that you shake both units until the lights turn green and flash rapidly on both, but we chose the other method of pressing the jog dial for six seconds until we heard the voice prompt say “intercom pairing.” Once the LEDs turned blue, the connection was established. After that, each time we turned on our units and wanted to connect, it was as easy as a push of a button. That’s as user-friendly as it gets!

While Genevieve and I happily chatted our way all over Italy, we had also paired our 20Ss with Sena’s Prism video camera. With our two 20Ss in intercom mode, both our voices were recorded along with the video from the Prism. Now when we review all the video footage, we get to relive the whole experience, silly comments included.

The Prism comes in a big box with a plethora of mounting options. There’s everything from a dual suction-cup mount, to a handlebar mount, to several different ways to mount it to a helmet. The Prism itself is water-resistant, but for submerging the unit, Sena provided a clear plastic waterproof housing. There is one Li-Ion rechargeable battery and no memory card; you’ll need to buy a class 10 or higher micro SD card up to 32 GB separately. The battery charges while it’s in the unit, and a USB power/data cable is included, too. It takes a few hours to fully charge the battery, so I ordered another one for my trip. (A good journalist always has a backup power source.) The battery lasted for several hours, and, in fact, I ran out of space on the memory card before the battery was done.

There are just two buttons on top of the Prism. An LCD readout on the side lets you know what mode you’re in, battery level, micro SD card status, Bluetooth status, and more. I found using the buttons to change settings to be easy and intuitive, but Sena includes a huge flow chart in case you get stumped. You can also download a Sena app on your smartphone, and, when paired with the Prism, allows you to view and change some settings. However, I found the app to be limited in its capabilities.

The Prism records video in one of three definitions; 1080p, 720p, or 480p. If you want to save room on your card, you can choose a lower definition, but I always shoot everything in HD. There are two lens settings; wide angle and normal view. I tried both, and decided that

there’s very little distortion on the 137 degree wide angle mode, so I leave it set there so I get the biggest view.

The Prism can take still pictures in several different qualities, too, from 3 MP to 5 MP. Taking a photo while the video is rolling happens simultaneously, in other words, taking a photo doesn’t interrupt the video. There’s also an option to take burst shots — three, five, or 10 pictures with one press of the button. And, a time-lapse mode can be set to take a picture every one, three, five, 10, 30, or 60 seconds.

The Prism has an internal microphone, and settings include high gain, low gain, and off. There’s an auto-mute setting that will mute the internal mic when the Prism is paired with a 20S, so the sound you record comes from the 20S mic.

The Prism is what’s called a point-of-view (POV) camera. The lens faces forward, so when it’s mounted to the side of your helmet, it’s sitting flush against the helmet with the lens pointing ahead. For me, this is the ideal camera position, as it’s close to my eyes, giving me the most natural POV video. Mounted on several different motorcycle fairings ended up with too much shake for my liking, and didn’t put any part of the motorcycle in view.

If you do prefer a motorcycle-mounted POV, however, another great feature of the Prism paired with a 20S is that you can use the 20S to command the Prism to either “start recording” or “stop recording.” This is pretty handy when the camera is mounted out of reach. But even if you use the buttons on the camera, it’s reassuring to hear the voice prompt tell you that you’re recording, rather than having to guess whether you pushed the right button, like on so many other video cameras.

If you’re in the market for a new communication system, video camera, or both, check out all the great products Sena has to offer. If you’ve already got a GoPro, Sena has an audio pack that will send Bluetooth audio to a GoPro. If you want a remote controller, so you don’t need to reach up to use a jog dial, it offers that, too. With the rate of evolving technology, it seems like there’s something new to check out every day. — *Tricia Szulewski*

- + 20S voice prompts let you know verbally what’s going on.
- + All mounting options and cases included.
- + Audio and visual quality is top-of-the-line.
- Prism pairing with 20S is touchy.
- Apps need more development.

SOURCES

Sena Technologies
20S, \$299
Prism, \$249
Sena.com



In addition to the K&N stock replacement air filter, K&N offers a high-performance custom open-element air cleaner assembly for the 2014 Star Bolt and R-Spec (#RK-3940). K&N started by creating a custom black powdercoated aluminum backing plate with integrated velocity stacks to provide a solid mounting surface for the high-flow air filter. Finishing off the performance air cleaner kit is a billet aluminum top plate, which is powdercoated black and CNC-machined for contrast-cut reliefs and a K&N logo. In addition to providing an aesthetic improvement, the RK-3940 is dyno-proven to increase horsepower by 7.14 hp and torque by 4.81 ft-lbs. on an otherwise stock Bolt. \$279. K&N Filters, 800/858-3333, KNFilters.com.

This classic pewter-finished belt buckle features an iconic skull, framed by the words "Harley-Davidson Motorcycles." This is an officially Licensed Motor Company Product. It measures 2-3/4" round and will fit most belts. Several other Harley-Davidson styles are also available. \$40. Info: GreaseRag.com.

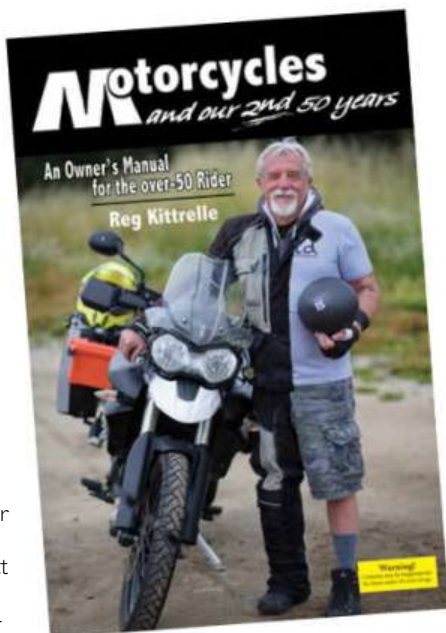


Headwinds introduces its new all-in-one, high-output H9 and H11 LED bulbs for 2014 and later FLHX Street Glides. These powerful, energy-efficient bulbs produce whiter and brighter light than halogen, a 6,000 K color temperature, and 2,000 lumens. The H9 is your high beam, and the H11 is your low. Equipped with American-made CREE LED chips, the bulb, fan, and driver come in an easy-to-install, plug-and-play package. Headwinds, 626/359-8044, Headwinds.com.



AMSOIL redesigned the packaging of 10W-30 and 10W-40 Synthetic Metric motorcycle oil for metric sportbikes and cruisers. The advanced formulation remains unchanged, providing excellent performance and protection for metric motorcycle applications. It's specially formulated to excel in all areas unique to motorcycles, including high-engine rpm, wet-clutch lubrication, and extreme-pressure regions of gears while providing smooth, confident shifts. AMSOIL Synthetic Metric motorcycle oil is multi-functional and fulfills the requirements of both domestic and foreign motorcycles. AMSOIL, 800/777-8491, AMSOIL.com.

In his new book, *Motorcycles and Our 2nd 50 Years*, Reg Kittrelle takes a close look at what it means to be "old" in our culture and how it applies to motorcycle riders. He examines the social mores that shape our perception of age, takes a critical look at the food we eat, and lays out a simple, no-fad exercise plan in addition to covering various aspects of motorcycling that contributes to riding longer and riding competently, such as lighting, tools, track schools, and clothing. He throws in several two-wheel "hacks" that can also contribute to our riding enjoyment. Reg, who's 72 and been a rider for more than 50 years, states "riding a motorcycle has nothing to do with how old you are, and everything to do with how old you think you are." \$19.99. *Motorcycles and Our 2nd 50*, MotorcyclesAnd2nd50.com.



Garmin's new GPS models (Nuvi 50 through Nuvi 58 series) are popular biker GPS units, and now, the eCaddy Diamond Mount is available for these new Garmins! Specifically designed for the Garmin Nuvi GPS units, the form-fitting cradle ensures the GPS will never fall out. It even has cut-outs for buttons and plug-ins. The Ultra-Swivel provides unlimited positioning ability but is so slim and unobtrusive, you'll hardly know it's there. Security and anti-vibration features are built into every Leader Legacy mount. Stainless steel, aluminum, and chrome-plated parts are rust-proof and machined in the US. Possible mounting locations include handlebar, brake/clutch bracket, mirror, windshield, and more. \$59.99. Leader Motorcycle, 763/535-1440, LeaderMotorcycle.com.





Corbin designed its new Sport Bucket seats for the Polaris Slingshot on platforms that work with the existing Polaris seat frame and slider. Corbin opted for more thigh and side bolsters while keeping shoulders free to move. Not only does this look more appropriate inside the Slingshot, but it maximizes cabin space and doesn't make you feel cramped. The Sport Bucket seats are designed to accommodate a rider wearing a helmet by giving an additional 1-1/2" of room at the top of the genuine leather seats. Optional built-in electric heaters are available. Corbin includes a fabric sunshade to give some shade while you're out and about. No-heat single, \$693; single with heat, \$953; no-heat pair, \$1,292; pair with heat, \$1,876. Corbin, 800/538-7035, Corbin.com.

ShockStrap is a unique shock-absorbing tie-down that incorporates three of the most versatile tie-down principles into one system. It's quick-and-easy like a motorcycle tie-down, has the reliability of a ratchet system, and the versatility of a shock cord. The ShockStrap section, when stretched, maintains tension on the webbing, locking it into the buckle. When road vibrations cause loads to shift and settle,

ShockStrap acts like a shock absorber and contracts with the load, keeping it secure. The wide-opening hooks and buckle are yellow zinc-coated, which lasts eight to 10 times longer than powdercoated metal. ShockStrap is available in 6', 10', and 19' lengths. ShockStrap, 888/334-3456, ShockStrap.com. **M**



Index Of Advertisers

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BB Comfort Systems	ButtyBuddy.com.....	81
Bluebeards Inc.	BluebeardsOriginal.com.....	17
Bradford Exchange	CollectiblesToday.com.....	27
Continental General Tire	Conti-Moto.com.....	11
Dennis Kirk	DennisKirk.com.....	3
Faarken Biker Stirrups	508/210-2707.....	29
Freedom Performance	310/324-0415.....	25
Geico Insurance	800/44-CYCLE	C3
GIVI.....	704/679-4123.....	67
Harbor Freight	HarborFreight.com	8-9
Indian Motorcycles	IndianMotorcycle.com	C2
Iron Braid Inc.	800/461-IRON.....	50
J&P Cycles.....	855/515-7080	C4
Kabuto Helmets	KabutoUSA.com.....	7
Klock Werks	KustomBaggers.com.....	51
Leatherworks, The.....	209/983-9200.....	77
Marlin Corp.	800/777-5543.....	77
Mustang Seats	800/243-1392.....	13
National Motorcycle Museum	319/462-3925.....	77
Powerlet	877/752-7835.....	51
Progressive Insurance	800/PROGRESSIVE.....	5
Rivco Products	888/801-8222.....	35
Tsukayu	Tsukayu.com.....	50
Wizards Products.....	800/356-7223.....	35

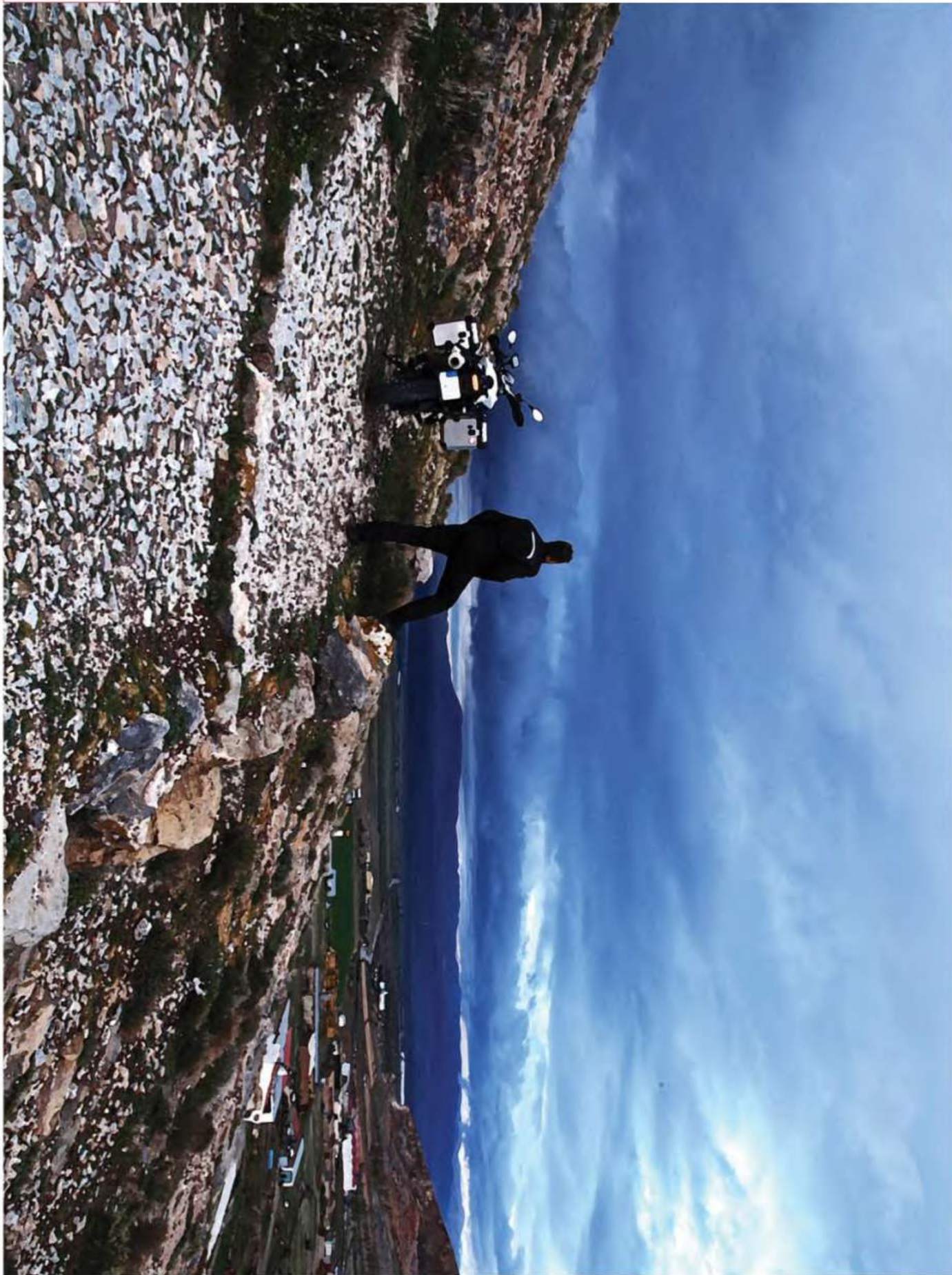
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